





## INVESTIGART 3

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SOMMAIRE / CONTENTS:

GOETHE'S SPIRITUAL AESTHETIC	
Bonnie Manacas . . . . .	1
RELEXION ET EXPERIENCE A TRAVERS UNE ANALOGIE ESTHETIQUE	
Joseph Fainaru . . . . .	16
AN INVESTIGATION INTO JACK BURNHAM'S "THE STRUCTURE OF ART"	
Rodney Heather . . . . .	36
TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PERSONAL APPROACH TO AESTHETIC EDUCATION	
E. Bruce Clark . . . . .	63
LES ARTS PLASTIQUES ET LA COMMUNICATION	
Wim Huysecom . . . . .	74
ON CONCEPTUAL ART	
Sophie Landau . . . . .	83
A CONSIDERATION OF SPACE AS A PRIMARY EXPERIENCE IN DESIGN	
Lydia Ferrabee . . . . .	103

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Aesthetics today is like a savage child who wanders gaily through the corridors of the House of Man's Knowledge, without ever managing to settle down in a home of his own.

(E.F. Kaelin. An Existentialist Aesthetic. P.xii.)

It is with this spirit that we present this issue of Investigart. The articles contained herein are the result of a graduate seminar in aesthetic theory in which each student was asked to present a paper on a topic of his or her choosing. The original idea was to have each student write on a specific aspect of a given topic in aesthetics, however, it quickly became apparent that one topic would not meet the needs or interests of all seven students. Thus, each student has pursued the corridor which satisfies his or her own needs and interests.

The topics range from highly theoretical concerns, through reviews of selected writings, to descriptive research. It is with this overview in mind that the sequence of presentation has been arranged. It is hoped that the reader will be permissive enough to allow the savage child to wander, keeping in mind that exploration has shown itself to be the cornerstone of the House of Man's Knowledge.

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GOETHE'S SPIRITUAL AESTHETIC

BONNIE MANACAS

Cette thèse est une description des théories esthétiques de Goethe, laquelle est une base pour l'approche d'esthétique spirituelle. Ses théories sont fondées sur "Urpolarität" qui explique le phénomène de la polarité, et "Urphenomena" représentant l'origine des phénomènes. Ces concepts sont discutés en comparaison des théories esthétiques de Karl Jung, et en relation avec l'éducation des civilisations des anciens Grecs et Indiens. Dans ses théories esthétiques Goethe nous donne une nouvelle direction de conscience.

PREFACE

The content of this article is based upon the writings of Rudolf Stienner (1861 - 1925), who edited Goethe's scientific works, and is considered an authority on Goethe.



## I

Art is the activity which most directly expresses the state of human consciousness. Throughout history man's art has reflected his awareness of a spiritual reality beyond the sense perceptible world. Investigation of aesthetics in relation to man's spiritual awareness would enable us to broaden the scope of our aesthetic theories.

Today, more and more people are concerned with exploring the spiritual aspect of man. The increase in meditation, as a means of spiritual self discovery, and the revival of eastern religions are both expressions of man's spiritual search. In the area of science, investigations are being made of phenomena that suggest the existence of different modes of perception and different levels of reality.

I would like to discuss the aesthetic theories of Johanne Von Goethe, the great German writer. Goethe formulated his aesthetic theories from his experiments in natural science and from his ideas regarding non-material or spiritual reality.

Goethe lived from 1749 to 1825. This was the period when most of the archeological discoveries of the ruins of ancient Greece took place. In the periodical "Propyleum" that Goethe edited he wrote: "Let each man in his own way be a Greek, but let him be a true Greek".(1)

The "truth" that he felt permeated the Greek civilization was man's intuitive knowledge of spiritual forces. The spiritual forces were perceived in nature and man's life was intimately connected with nature's rhythms.

Classical Greek sculpture asserted the way that man felt about his body. He "wore his body" as if it were a gift, and he thanked the gods for imbuing him with a body, the material substance of the universe.

The goal of Greek education was the cultivation of the physical body, as a basis from which spiritual knowledge could grow. The child was taught a choral dance in which the rhythm of his breathing was co-ordinated with the steps of his dancing. The Greek gymnast aimed at developing sensitivity to the environment, in his students. Nature communicated its secrets to those with properly developed bodies.(2)

The priest class learned how to interpret forces circulating between earth and the cosmos, and thereby developed astronomy and astrology. Birth, death, and growth were known to be regulated by the heavenly bodies. The activity of the cosmos was actually heard, and earthly music was a reflection of the celestial "music of the spheres".(3)

Goethe described human nature of this era:

"It knows itself one with the world,  
and does not experience the objective  
external world as something alien that  
comes toward the inner world of man  
from without. It recognizes in the  
world the answering counterpart to  
its own sensations".(4)

The ancient Greek expressed his spiritual relationship to nature in his art through imitation. Aristotle claimed imitation to be man's highest aesthetic principle. Through imitation man attempted to capture the eternal quality of nature, to grasp the essence underlying everchanging physical phenomena.(5)

Goethe lived in a culture influenced by the Greek era. He saw in the Greek era a state of equilibrium in man's consciousness.

The faculties of intuition and intellect were balanced. The experience of the external world of nature and man's internal world, were recognized as "counterparts". The expression of this balanced state of consciousness in art was imitation.

Goethe used the term "intuition" in reference to man's inner sense. He saw it as a current of consciousness that man tunes into as a result of great concentration. His thoughts on intuition are well summarized by the American psychologist Franz Winkler:

"A stream of creative forces on its  
way down into matter, pause in the  
consciousness of man to endow him  
with intuitive faculties".(6)

Through our intuition we perceive creative forces before they have materialized. Intellectual concepts, are derived from organized sense perceptions which are essentially transitory phenomena. Thus through intuition we participate in the creation of matter. Whereas through our intellect we perceive already created matter on its way to decay.



Franz Winkler describes Goethe's conception of the intellect:

"A counterstream, matter returning  
towards the source of its origin  
reveals its nature in the human  
intellect.....through his intellect  
man observes the laws of death". (7)

Goethe saw civilized man during the classical era as having reached the proper balance between the forces of intellect and intuition. He felt that the health of an individual and a culture is maintained to the extent that it is balanced between these two polar forces. The concept of polarity or "Urpolaritat" was one of his main aesthetic premises. (8)

He considered the great philosophy of ancient Greece to be a result of this balance. The Greek philosophers were able to combine their intellectual knowledge with their intuitive knowledge of the spiritual world. Plato, for example theorized that his physical senses were a means of receiving the outward sensible impressions of an object without perceiving its essential "Form". Its true "Form" remained inaccessible to our physical senses. It could be known only through an inner sense.

Upon Plato's "Theory of Form" Aristotle built his metaphysics. His aim was a systematic analysis of the origin of the physical realm. The origin, he claimed, is to be found beyond the physical in the spiritual realm. Aristotle called metaphysics a "science of causes" of physical phenomena. (9)

From the Greek era onward, man's intellect began to dominate over his intuition. The natural sciences with their emphasis on empirical sense data eventually replaced the metaphysical sciences.

Man evolved from an attempt to grasp the source of matter to scientific analysis of matter itself. His attitude of confidence in nature was transformed into a feeling of confidence in himself. He began to see himself as the "source" the "creative cause" to be investigated. Goethe wrote:

"In that man is placed on nature's  
pinacle, he regards himself as  
another whole nature whose task  
it is to bring forth another  
whole pinnacle". (10)

As man's relationship to nature altered so did his aesthetic expression. His intuitive ability to perceive spiritual forces in nature was replaced with an intellectual ability to analyse nature. Thus, imitation of nature no longer fulfilled his needs. Imitation, at this point in man's evolution would be a mere lifeless copying of transitory phenomenon without capturing anything of its eternal quality.

The impermanence of material existence was a threat rather than a natural condition in the cycle of life, death and rebirth. Instead of imitation of nature, man sought to "abstract" a constant from the transitory in nature.

The domination of his intellect made him less sensitive to the spiritual forces in nature. Copying natural forms would be a way of emphasizing his already materialistic tendencies. He needed purer, more abstract forms to evoke his spiritual sensitivity. Writing on aesthetics, William Worringer describes this as man's "urge to abstraction" as opposed to his earlier "urge to empathy".(11)

The ancient Greek psyche was like a mirror that reflected nature in its art. As man evolved what had been a clear reflective surface began to act more like a womb in which sense stimuli could gestate. The art born of this womb was to be influenced and modified by the womb. Thus art became more abstract as man became more and more reliant on abstract intellectual thought.

Goethe wrote that modern man, having lost his ability to perceive the spiritual forces in nature becomes paralysed.

"Surrounded and embraced by nature  
we are unable to withdraw from her  
or advance more deeply into her".(12)

This condition was felt by the "Existential" artists and philosophers, who saw man estranged from nature, alienated from himself and other men.

Goethe and his friend the poet Schiller believed that through abstraction in art man could find "freedom" rather than alienation. Schiller wrote that man is "unfree" in that he is victim to the bombardment of sensations from outside himself. As long as he is awake his senses are active and he cannot control the continuous sensory stimulation. He is also "unfree" in that he cannot control the organization of these sensations into concepts.



The "freedom" that Schiller referred to could be attained if man could exercise a degree of control over these conditions. In art he could find a means of control. Art allowed man to manipulate his sensations and concepts and thereby create his own reality.

Schiller believed that the impulse to create art arises from the same source as the "play instinct". In art as in play man alters what nature presents, to him, thereby asserting a control over nature. (13)

Man's relationship to nature has altered. He no longer seeks the cause behind the phenomena as he did in ancient Greece, but seeks to control the phenomena. Control and intellectual manipulation of phenomena without intuitive perception of spiritual source leads to a form of materialism; materialism that is essentially a result of an imbalance between the polar forces of the intuition and the intellect. The intellect accepts the world of matter as the ultimate reality and denies its relation to a non-physical source.

Control and manipulation of natural elements are the basis of 20th century art. Kandinsky quoted Goethe in explanation of his aesthetic philosophy. He emphasized that the artist must always maintain an active intuitive relationship with the spiritual world or else his work becomes materialistic. He quoted these words of Goethe's:

"The artist stands free and above nature and can treat her to his higher purposes. He is both her lord and her servant. Her servant in that he must use earthly means. Her lord because he makes these earthly means subservient to his higher intention". (14)

## II

The phrase "higher intentions" in this context refers to man's aesthetic aim to capture the eternal spiritual essence,

the "archetype" of an object. The archetype in Goethe's terminology is the spiritual reality behind the material, the true "form" that the Greeks referred to in their philosophy and tried to capture in their art.

The term archetype is derived from the Greek "arche". It was used by the most ancient of Greek philosophers Aximander to mean the spiritual source of and controlling force within the universe. Plato based his "Theory of Form" on the archetype as the "spiritual prototype" from which matter is generated. (15)

The archetype plays an important role within Goethe's aesthetic philosophy, and in his scientific study of the metamorphosis of plants called, plant morphology. Morphology is based upon the investigation of the archetype or primal plant structure from which different species evolve.

The German "Gestalt" movement in psychology, has been discussed in relation to aesthetics. It owes much of its theory to the concept of morphology. "Morphe" is the Greek word for form and in German form is translated "Gestaltin". Gestalt psychology aimed at investigating the archetype or original structures of brain processes and their metamorphosis.

Max Weirthiemar, one of the originators of Gestalt theory claimed it to be based upon the principle that whatever happens to a part of a whole is determined by laws inherent within the whole. This principle is call isomorphism. The mind tends to see an almost completed but incomplete circle as complete. Or in gestalt terminology, there is a pattern in the brain that is isomorphic with the completed circle. (16)

In analogy we can look at man's aesthetic activity as the completing of a pattern built into him. He perceived the physical form of an object and through his art he seeks to capture the true form or archetype and complete the pattern.

This is an ancient concept reflected in the saying "like is only known to like". Plotinus wrote that man participates in ideal "form" through art. Aesthetic feeling is the experiencing of the "joy of recognition", it is spiritual isomorphism.

The aesthetic experience, or experiencing beauty, is as close as we can get to experiencing the archetype, with our present sense capacity.



During aesthetic contemplation we feel something very different, unexplainable and undefinable. The reason that this feeling does not correspond to other sensations is because it is related to the development of a new sense capacity. This sense capacity is not related to the perception of material reality but to spiritual reality. The aesthetic experience is the budding of a new spiritual sense that when fully developed will enable man to perceive the archetypal reality. Goethe wrote:

"beauty is a manifestation of  
secret laws which failing beauty  
would remain forever concealed"(17)

Nature reveals her supersensible origins to man as we perceive her beauty. Goethe believed that it is through the cultivation of an aesthetic attitude that we become receptive to nature's secret of the archetype. Goethe calls the aesthetic attitude one of "contemplative discernment".

This attitude of "contemplative discernment" can be related to Edward Bullough's theory of "Psychical Distancing". Bullough considers the aesthetic experience, to be the result of a process whereby we free ourselves from practical everyday interests. We perceive an object free from its proper or sensible function in our world and thereby free ourselves. (18)

Goethe says the result of this freedom from the restrictions of the ordinary sense world enables us to develop a new sense capacity. Through "contemplative discernment" we begin to "discern" the spiritual archetype behind the physical manifestation.

It is interesting to view Goethe's concept of the archetype in relation to psychoanalyst Karl Jung. Jung's teacher, Freud attributed to man a "common psychic heritage", from which man's personal psyche develops. This idea was further developed by Jung as the "collective unconscious". (19)

Jung wrote that man received stimuli from the collective unconscious in the form of images or symbols which he called "archetypal". He used the term to signify the means through which the unconscious expressed itself to man's consciousness.

Jung claimed the "archetypal symbols" to be the most direct connection that we have with our "source". Thus art, as the

representation of the unconscious is the ultimate expression of man's unconscious. Art reveals through its symbols what otherwise lies inaccessible. (20)

The symbols have a beneficial effect on man. They help man to become whole, integrate him. Archetypal symbols stimulate an awareness of the unconscious. When the unconscious is stimulated, man, who lives primarily in his conscious state, is brought to a more balanced condition. This is essentially the same as Goethe's theory that health is maintained through a balance of the intuition (unconscious) and the intellect (conscious). Goethe uses the term archetype differently from Jung.

This refers to the actual spiritual forces themselves as archetypes. He expressed the possibility of experiencing the "actuality" that the symbols represent. Thus what remains hidden within the "collective unconscious" in Jungian terms, is to Goethe made perceptible by a new sense capacity.

Knowledge which appears to us as ultimate in symbolic form, could have been perceived differently in other historical eras. The mode of thought of the ancient Greek, described earlier, shows that their connections with nature was different from our own. Their more intuitive consciousness enabled them to have a more direct experience of the archetypal source. (21)

Plato describes man as a recipient of only the shadow of the light of reality in his allegory of the cave. He does not however, ultimately condemn him to this fate. In "Phaedo", the dialogue of Socrates before his death, Plato reveals to us that man can attain direct experience of the highest knowledge. (22)

Goethe believed that the highest knowledge was to be obtained through the development of a new spiritual sense. This idea has been central to the eastern culture as well as the ancient Greek.

The core idea of Buddhism is the perception of the spiritual reality behind the apparent physical world. The spiritual reality is perceived through the development of spiritual centres that lie dormant until stimulated. These centres called "Chackras" are stimulated in various ways,



through the contemplation or creation of art, through meditation, through physical training. (23)

The rhythmic flowing of breath through the body channels in yogic posture are based upon this idea. The aim of Yoga, which means union, is the union with the spiritual source of the physical through the development of the "Chackras".

The Greek culture was influenced by Indian sages who passed through Greece, and imparted their ancient wisdom. The emphasis of Greek education on physical training originated from this source. The aim of the gymnast was, as mentioned earlier, to learn nature's secrets through "properly" developed bodies. This refers to the proper development of this spiritual centre.

During the ancient Greek era and throughout other historical cultures man had a more direct spiritual perception of archetypal reality. Through his aesthetic activity he expressed and maintained this connection.

Goethe presents to us the idea that art serves as man's link with a level of reality that transcends the sense-perceptible one. Man seeks this level through his art because this spiritual level of reality, is the source of the physical sense world. The aesthetic impulse is stimulated by intuitive recognition of this "archetypal" level of reality. Aesthetic activity serves to develop the faculty of intuition into an actual spiritual organ of perception.

Art is seen in this light, to be more than communication of personal ideas or feelings. It communicates to us an objective "archetypal reality" as interpreted by our newly developing sense capacity.

As we analysed the evolution of man's consciousness we saw an imbalance, due to the domination of the intellect over the intuitions. Goethe pointed towards a re-establishment of balance through the development of a new inner sense.

This new equilibrium would enable man to perceive the archetypal essence and attain balance at an evolved level. The intuitive ability of the ancient Greeks would be joined with the intellectual ability of modern man. This new perception would be a merger of the two faculties of intellect and intuition.

The direction that Goethe pointed towards is not one we can expect to see fulfilled in the near future. It is a statement of the direction of the evolution of man's consciousness. Mankind presently has a materialistic and intellectual consciousness which prevents him from perceiving directly, anything beyond the realm of the material.

Goethe believed that mankind was soon to experience an awakening from this condition. His influence upon modern artists was very great. Kandinsky as if to fulfill Goethe's intentions wrote the following about mankind.

"Only just awakening after years of materialism, our soul is infected with the despair born of an unbelief, of a lack of purpose of aim. This materialism separates us from our more primitive ancestors." (24)

Today there are many social phenomena that indicate man's striving to awaken from the limitations of materialistic thinking. The search for a new perceptive faculty or an "expanded consciousness" is manifested in the use of drugs, mind control, meditation, Yoga, Scientology, etc..

We are approaching a time when through inward searching and through experimental science we are finding evidence of a spiritual "Archetypal" reality.

We must make certain that the future of aesthetic investigation is not stifled by overly intellectual and materialistic thinking. It must be in step with the awakening social climate. It is through art that man evolves. Goethe's spiritual aesthetic can help us come to this understanding. He wrote:

"He to whom  
Nature reveals  
Her manifest secret  
Yearns for art  
Nature's worthiest interpreter". (25)

In our era nature does not easily reveal her secrets. Through art we seek these revelations.



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REFLEXION et EXPERIENCE

A TRAVERS UNE ANALOGIE ESTHETIQUE

JOSEPH FAINARU

The traditional values must be respected in all kinds of research whatever they be - especially in the field of esthetics, which is by tradition, the knowledge of all "artistic beauty."

The differences that exist between artistic sciences, increases the state of incompatibility between the social aspect and the technological one.

The thinkers, whatever their tendencies may be, direct their works towards an efficient way of teaching an "esthetic."

All the new sciences, psychology, ethnology, anthropology and psychometry are definite orientations used by those same thinkers to fill up a gap that has been too long neglected - the work in itself is considerable if you gauge it on a universal scale. The whole problem here, will appear to be gigantic.

Nous assistons aujourd'hui à un profond développement de la réflexion esthétique.

L'esthétique est une science récente et son enseignement se répand rapidement et à profusion. La réflexion esthétique s'élargit, les courants sont multiples, les significations et les valeurs sont différentes. Malgré celà, les recherches ont un même intérêt, prenant leurs sources dans la métaphysique l'existentialisme, la psychologie, la sociologie, etc...

L'intérêt étant la science esthétique, quelle est l'étendue de ce mot et quel en est l'entendement? Quels sont les critères éventuels sur lesquels on pourrait adopter une théorie? Tout en sachant que le facteur personnel, loin de s'éliminer est au centre du problème. Notion, concept, sensation, émotion, ou tout simplement un vague sentiment? Ou une prise de conscience?

"La beauté n'est pas un désir  
mais une extase  
Elle n'est pas une bouche  
assoiffée  
Ni une main vide tendue  
Mais plutôt un coeur embrasé  
Et une âme enchantée".

Kalil Gibran 1966

L'attitude poétique peut nous donner encore satisfaction. Un vague sentiment dans l'évolution que la société moderne connaît n'est pas tout à fait suffisant et la prise de conscience dans cette évolution nécessite aujourd'hui des arguments basés sur des "valeurs" sûres, valeurs qui se sont développées récemment et ont atteint le niveau des "sciences". La psychologie, l'ethnologie, l'anthropologie, et bien entendu la psychométrie. Les valeurs traditionnelles ne doivent pas pour autant être négligées; les valeurs d'ordre historique, religieux, social, politique et symbolique qui sont et gardent leur importance.

Avant d'entrer dans toutes ces considérations scientifiques, il faut parler avant tout de l'instinct, et l'intuition, des facultés dominantes chez tout individu. Facultés plus ou moins développées mais indiscutablement



présentes, et que sans l'intuition il est impossible d'accéder à la compréhension d'une situation ou de l'objet...

Le propre de l'intuition esthétique c'est de spiritualiser la réalité, mais elle n'y parvient qu'au point de rencontre d'une activité théorique qui forme l'intuition, et l'activité pratique qui la met en oeuvre. Luis Laval 1936

Au stade de l'instinct, la beauté est-elle accessible à tout le monde? Un primitif peut-il "jouir" de la beauté d'un objet? Oui. L'espace, le temps, la nature, contribuent à un épanouissement de l'être, non contraint de vivre au rythme d'une société technologique évoluée....Ou bien de la beauté naturelle, comment doit-être considéré un bel objet et encore une belle nature? Par rapport à quoi se situe un bel objet en face d'une belle nature? Qu'est-ce qui les sépare? Rien ne les sépare, au contraire tout tâche de les réunir. L'instinct de l'homme primitif est peut-être un des seuls à rejoindre les deux concepts "nature" et "objet" instinctivement et intuitivement.

A première vue l'objet, "s'il est beau", devient un objet artistique. S'il devient objet artistique, il doit perdre toute notion d'intérêt "matériel" et gagner en essence - idée - vérité. En supposant que le "Beau" ait été défini, on pourrait tenir le raisonnement suivant: Est-il suffisant pour définir "l'objet artistique de qualité" d'éliminer l'intérêt matérialiste et du coup incorporer l'essence, l'idée et la vérité?

L'instinct joue-t-il un rôle dans la réflexion esthétique de l'individu, pour aller plus loin il faut d'abord essayer de répondre à toutes ces questions.

La première question est: qu'est-ce qui sépare un bel objet d'une belle nature, encore que je ne sache pas si on peut dissocier nature d'oeuvre d'art, mais je dirais que le facteur de dissociation est "l'idée". La deuxième question: L'instinct est-il un facteur majeur dans la réflexion esthétique?

Si l'artiste, le créateur est tributaire d'abord de son instinct alors oui, les contemplatifs aussi sont tributaires de leurs instincts. La troisième question: Qu'est-ce qu'un objet artistique? Quand un objet devient-il artistique?

L'idée de l'objet artistique nous amène à un nouveau fait, celui de la "création". Ainsi une belle nature ne peut pas devenir un fait artistique et nullement un objet d'art.

La nature vit d'elle même, la répéter ou la copier, peut nous donner un résultat d'une certaine "performance" et nullement une oeuvre d'art.

Les oeuvres d'art ont d'abord une idée et une essence, basée sur des vérités propres à son créateur. Mais l'oeuvre d'art est l'auteur lui-même. Donc du créateur à la rééation il y a un rapport de contraste et c'est là que se manifeste toute la subjectivité et qu'avec elle il faut toujours composer.

On ne peut pas tirer déjà une conclusion mais s'il existe une beauté uniquement artistique, alors il faut conclure que grâce à l'histoire des arts, des artistes, aux techniques matérielles ou formelles et enfin à la critique d'art, qu'il existe une science de l'art et que cette science est la meilleure introduction à l'esthétique, que l'esthétique est une réflexion et donc qu'elle est une philosophie de l'art....Elle cherche à éclairer la nature, à décrire l'origine, les espèces, la finalité, les rapports avec le beau, analyse le mystère de la beauté même.

La réflexion sur la technique avec normalisation des règles n'ont qu'un but, l'oeuvre et sa beauté; UNE APPROCHE HIERARCHIQUE.

Cela pourrait-il être l'aspect d'une approche philosophique de l'esthétique? De toute façon, cette possibilité d'approche peut faire place au sens de l'art, au jugement esthétique et aborder surtout le problème d'une éducation esthétique. En parlant "éducation" comment situer l'esthétique par rapport à l'individu, et l'individu par rapport à la situation esthétique?



Le beau est la révélation de ce que les individus ont de plus individuel et l'art est un effort pour former artificiellement dans la nature, des individualités pures. Il est nécessaire de conclure par conséquent que les objets s'individualisent en vertu des lois de la forme, au lieu de dire que je leur attribue une forme afin de pouvoir les individualiser.

Sous cet aspect, le concept esthétique prend aujourd'hui différentes formes à travers le monde. Les artistes, les critiques, les psychologues, les historiens et les philosophes mènent leurs travaux en groupe ou isolés. Les tendances se multiplient et les aspects sont nombreux. Autant que de groupes: Esthétique normative. Esthétique intégrale. Psycho esthétique. L'esthétique empirique et pragmatique. L'esthétique consacre et intègre les recherches scientifiques et philosophiques portant sur l'histoire de l'art, la psychologie, la sociologie et l'anthropologie, une doctrine de la culture.

Le fait qu'un rapport entre une situation et un individu, prend forme et existe, peut-être attribué au simple fait du comportement. Dans le cas qui nous intéresse précisément, cette situation doit être créée par une oeuvre esthétique: architecture, poésie, théâtre, danse, peinture, sculpture, cinéma...

M. E. Souriau, dans "Les structures maitresses de l'oeuvre d'art" mentionne: Toute oeuvre d'art dans n'importe quel domaine, a son propre plan d'existence. Les éléments d'une oeuvre d'art qui en font un "Univers cosmique" se tiennent ensemble en une structure sensible.

Etablir un rapport n'est pas automatiquement un jugement, et comment établir ce rapport, sinon par les réactions diverses des individus. Les individus placés devant ces beaux objets, en d'autres mots, devant les oeuvres d'arts, de quelle manière réagissent-ils et qu'est-ce qui les fait réagir? L'émotion, une émotion typique relevant de la contemplation "significative" d'une oeuvre d'art.

M. Souriau voit une réaction entre la présence physique des oeuvres d'art et les "qualia sensible"; l'oeuvre d'art est bien à la fois, hors du monde et dans le monde, et elle est d'abord dans le monde par cette présence physique, et

surtout parce que cette présence physique apporte un certain nombre de lois structurales précises à l'oeuvre d'art. L'homme et l'oeuvre d'art se rejoignent sur deux niveaux, individuel, où il y a interaction entre la sensibilité de l'individu, et les "qualia sensible" d'une oeuvre d'art à travers la contemplation qui les feront aboutir au plaisir esthétique.

Les fonctions motrices de tous les individus sont, à ne point douter, celles de la réceptivité et celles de la créativité. Empiriquement on peut dire aussi, active et passive. Je préfère la réceptivité et la créativité, par souci de vérité dans l'ordre chronologique, de toutes les opinions philosophiques sur l'esthétique, énoncées jusqu'à présent.

La réceptivité ainsi que la créativité étant des forces motrices et sachant que toute force motrice doit être nourrie, comment et avec quoi ces deux forces peuvent-elles être nourries? Par une activité pratique, l'apprentissage des techniques, la perpétuité des traditions, seule chance de survivance.

A première vue il me semble que cette nourriture dépend strictement de l'éducation. L'évolution de l'individu dans des milieux propices fait prendre à celui-ci conscience de toutes les valeurs en sa possession; à condition que le milieu corresponde aux aspirations de l'individu. Malgré cela il y aura une différence entre le milieu industriel et le milieu rural, qui chacun développera des valeurs différentes. Ces valeurs seront en permanent conflit d'une valeur par rapport à une autre. Si les conflits prennent naissance par rapport uniquement à des valeurs, cela veut dire que les valeurs sont différentes: valeurs de nature objectives et de nature subjectives, devenant des conditions d'un système de valeurs par rapport à une situation ou une expérience; dans le cas d'une situation le système devient subjectif et dans le cas d'une expérience le système devient objectif.

Donc l'éducation devrait s'attacher à ces rapports entre les valeurs. Un rapport intelligent et sensible situe une valeur, sur une échelle de valeurs, à sa juste place, d'où le besoin peut-être avant d'établir des "standards", d'établir un tableau d'une "analogie esthétique". Le besoin est présent par le fait que la



subjectivité de l'acte d'une part, et les manifestations transcendantes, "l'ambiguïté" d'autre part, sont indissociables et si on s'enferme en effet dans un ou l'autre aspect, toute compréhension du problème des valeurs nous sépare de la temporalité.

L'esthétique, en plus d'être dynamique, doit donc être totale, c'est à dire ouverte à toutes les possibilités. Elle ne doit jamais se clore, car celle qui nous intéresse, n'est pas écrite encore.

"Si la valeur est ce dont je manque et si "je" est arrachement à l'être qui est là devant moi, dans son perpétuel "Maintenant", je manque de tout indistinctement, de tout ce que je n'ai pas choisi et aussi de ce que j'ai choisi, car ce n'est pas finalement ce que j'avais choisi. Alors voit-on les hommes s'efforcer de valoriser ce qu'ils sont, pour n'être pas trop malheureux."

Christian Brunet  
1962

Si le rapport des valeurs donne naissance à des conflits, ceux-ci par rapport au comportement de l'individu, comment peuvent-ils se traduire?: par des réactions; ces réactions seraient-elles de la même intensité devant des éléments différents?....

Bien sûr, les réactions seront d'intensité différente, chaque réaction répondra différemment au choc émotionnel, provoqué par tel ou tel souvenir. A condition toutefois que ce choc se produise. En produisant des chocs, cela pourrait nous amener à un système, ce qui serait souhaitable. Car un système de valeurs peut être établi et il ne peut être établi que par moi et pour moi.

"Il doit être l'acte d'un sujet et la valeur doit être trouvée dans les relations que ce sujet constitue en se constituant lui même."

Christian Brunet

Il combine et relationne, il contemple et résume en un regard, en "un présent" qui est sa "présence" le "l'avenir".

Provoqué ou déclenché il y a réaction et cela je crois, nous intéresse au plus haut degré, et c'est ici qu'il faut chercher une voie.

En présence de quoi peuvent se manifester ces réactions? En présence d'une oeuvre esthétique? et qu'est-ce qu'une oeuvre esthétique? Poésie, Drame, Sculpture, Peinture, Architecture, Danse, le tout ensemble? un paysage naturel peut-il provoquer un choc émotionnel? si oui, un bon repas aussi. Peut-on dire que les voies par lesquelles s'acheminent ces émotions sont visuelles, auditives, tactiles, gustatives ou odorantes. En qualité de professeur d'art, je dois me pencher sur le fait que les chocs émotionnels doivent être provoqués par tous les moyens, et surtout visuels et tactiles. Le choc doit être une tension et non un fait, un conflit et non une paix, un produit et non un être, jamais achevé et toujours provisoire, il doit être esthétique.

Dans l'éducation, le souci majeur actuellement est l'éducation des arts par les arts. Quelle est la différence entre ces deux notions, et leur trait d'union? Parce qu'il y a au départ deux notions: la première est l'enseignement des arts dans l'éducation et la deuxième l'éducation par les arts. L'éducation par les arts n'est-elle pas de créer un esprit propice et sensible à l'environnement, à son développement ainsi qu'à son évolution? Cet esprit sensible peut-il se manifester uniquement à la notion du Beau? ou faut-il inclure le "laid"? Peut-on dissocier une notion de l'autre? La plus grande difficulté est justement "là". Les conflits se manifestent entre ces deux notions, le beau et le laid.

Comment enseigner seulement le beau en faisant obstruction à la réalité, et d'autre part comment outrepasser certaines règles d'une certaine morale d'une certaine autorité?....

A cause justement de ces "difficultés" on a du mal et on tourne autour de ces notions. Dans le jugement esthétique de Kant, dans le chapitre "Description", il fait d'autres distinctions comme par exemple entre celui qui discerne le Beau et celui qui discerne le Sublime. Le beau et le sublime ont des caractères communs: le pouvoir de frapper l'esprit immédiatement en dehors de toute connaissance: l'instinct et l'intuition, facultés présentes et dominantes chez tout individu comme j'en faisais d'ailleurs mention au début de l'article. Une partie des caractères à propos du beau se retrouve donc



pour le sublime, mais ils s'opposent aussi. Et là où ils s'opposent apparaît une raison morale. Cette raison morale est animée par un sentiment moral. "Dieu" être infini et parfait, vérité et bien absolu, les postulat de la raison et du bien; pour la vérité, problématique du problème et critique de la connaissance, pour le bien, aspiration contradictoire; nostalgie platonicienne-différent-divergent-opposé-ambiguïté....Manifestation Transcendante. Ici on peut trouver l'opposition, le plaisir dans le premier et le sentiment moral dans le deuxième.

Le beau (toujours d'après Kant) est un acte de conscience qui juge du beau. Par quelle démarche passe-t-il, que suppose-t-il et que refuse-t-il?

La question principale n'est donc pas: Qu'est-ce que le beau? mais, qu'est-ce que le jugement sur le beau?

"La connaissance énonce un jugement théorique grâce à des concepts des objets: jugement sur le vrai. Le désir cherche à accomplir des fins: il peut lui-même être réglé, soit par des tendances de la nature sensible (besoin), qui lui font chercher l'agréable, soit par la volonté raisonnable (jugement moral sur le bien) soit par la recherche des moyens de réaliser une fin donnée Utile"....Enfin ressentir du plaisir ou de la peine, soit par la sensation (on retrouve ici l'agréable) soit par tout autre façon qui reste à définir et qui est le beau. Kant.

Bien sûr, Kant ne s'arrête pas là, il se lance dans des descriptions de tous les sentiments: sensation, concepts, idées, et jugements. Il pose des problèmes et cherche des solutions. Or, on voit dès le début que le beau ne peut ni être constaté à la façon d'un fait empirique ni démontré à la façon d'une vérité rationnelle. L'universalité du "jugement de goût" ne peut donc se fonder ni sur une objectivité qu'il n'a pas, ni sur la généralité d'un concept, mais sur la subjectivité même: elle est l'universalité d'un état d'esprit.

Dans "L'esthétique intégrale" de Christian Brunet 1962, la subjectivité prend une place significative dans l'expérience esthétique intégrale par des exemples lourds de vérité, la

chaleur quand j'ai froid-Un(objet) qui ne vaut qu'à cause d'un manque que j'ai éprouvé. Ce manque est d'ailleurs variable, la variation peut être d'ordre dévalué provisoirement: mais qui garde son potentiel de valeur (en contradiction de Sartre, "dans le manque que j'en ai"), mais dans l'orientation positive de ce manque: par exemple, l'eau vue par un homme, désirée par un homme, bue par un homme, c'est une "eau d'homme", complètement différente de l'eau en général. Elle participe à mon univers, elle reçoit sa valeur...que, ce "vers" quoi je tends, vaut pour moi? Ou bien que vaut, ce vers quoi je tends?....La préférence est en relation directe avec le MOMENT.

Sans aller aussi loin, Hegel a une approche semblable du beau: "Le beau se définit comme la manifestation sensible de l'idée". Le beau est la représentation sensible qui appartient à l'art; l'art est ce qui révèle à la conscience, la vérité sans forme sensible; forme sensible ou l'apparence enferme sans doute une signification plus profonde, mais qui ne cherche pas à rendre saisissable, par cet intermédiaire sensible, l'idée comme telle dans sa généralité, car justement, cette unité de l'idée et de l'apparence individuelle est l'essence du beau et de sa production dans l'art.

Le vrai c'est l'idée, lorsqu'elle est considérée en elle-même dans son principe général et en soi et qu'elle est pensée comme telle. Car ce n'est pas sous sa forme extérieure et sensible qu'elle existe pour la raison, mais dans son caractère d'idée universelle.

Dans la théorie du beau et du plaisir esthétique d'après Schopenhauer, il n'y a pas à proprement parler, de spécificité du beau. Tout est beau, ou du moins peut être beau:

"Puisque, d'une part, toute chose donnée peut être considérée d'une manière purement objective, en dehors de toute relation; puisque, d'autre part, la volonté se manifeste dans chaque chose à un degré quelconque de son objectivité; puisque par la suite, chaque chose est belle".

Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer a surtout en vue le beau artistique dans son esthétique, dans la mesure ou celui-ci présente le beau de nature, l'avantage d'exprimer des idées plus intéressantes du point de vue de la volonté. Autrement dit, un objet quelconque peut-être beau a condition pourtant qu'il soit traité esthétiquement: ce qui renvoie au problème de la spécificité du beau.

La mythologie grecque fournit de multiples aspects de la beauté, par la façon de l'interprétation et de l'approche. Il y a un lien nécessaire entre l'art et la perfection, qui s'appelle la beauté en terme esthétique. Et il n'est pas superflu d'affirmer qu'un tel lien existe. Car depuis Kant on se méfie du beau en soi mais on a décèlé la présence des ambiguïtés, liens entre les propositions et le monde réel, faits concrets dans un concept esthétique; Deucalion, fils de Prométhée, repeuple la terre en jetant des pierres derrière lui: chaque fois, c'est un homme qui surgit. Pygmalion s'éprend de la statue de Galatée et voici que Galatée s'anime....N'est-ce pas le voeu le plus haut de l'art? Si le beau est idéalisé dans sa perfection ce n'est pas une perfection basée sur une performance technique, mais sur toute cette beauté qui s'identifie à l'idée. L'idée reste et survit au delà d'une présence.

De cette remarque se dégagent deux aspects; qu'il est parfaitement raisonnable de croire que la beauté a un fondement réel et que le jugement d'une oeuvre d'art est en fait un processus de transaction entre les qualités objectives de l'oeuvre et le schéma psychologique et conceptuel d'une personnalité. Qu'il existe bien un "ordre de priorités" lesquelles ne nous sont pas entièrement inaccessibles: Historique, Sociales, Politiques, Psychologiques, Anthropologiques, priorités qui viennent avec des valeurs spécifiques en nous obligeant de prendre en considération le jugement esthétique.

En ce qui concerne strictement l'éducation, ces deux aspects sont très pertinents et ils ont fait l'objet de recherches dans le domaine de l'esthétique positive. Nouvelle méthode pédagogique présentée au Congrès Mondial des arts de Prague en 1966 par INSEA. Mais ce paragraphe sera repris dans la conclusion de cet exposé. La raison en est justement les difficultés rencontrées dans l'éducation et qui sont présentes tout le long du parcours de l'étude.



Aussi n'est-il pas étonnant qu'on ne puisse définir à proprement parler la beauté? Mais encore en poursuivant la beauté et en l'associant à l'art, il faut arriver fatalement à un compromis ou à un rapport avec une harmonie ou l'informe peut se complaire avec le difforme, ou bien insulter l'être, ou le nier.

De ce point de vue l'art pourra-t-il faire place à l'imperfection et au mal? et on peut se demander si la souffrance et le crime ne font pas vœu à un salut esthétique. La laideur avec les êtres les plus hideux et le mal avec les sentiments les plus ignobles viennent s'ajouter dans ce rapport de valeurs. Révoltant du point de vue moral, mais vrai et consolant du point de vue esthétique.

L'être humain peut-il rester insensible devant les horreurs d'un carnage? devant la beauté tragique d'un incendie? Les peintres n'ont-ils pas engendré des anges et des démons? N'ont-ils pas fait dialoguer le bien et le mal? et pour cela peut-on affirmer que l'art se conjugue avec la morale? et si vraiment c'était comme ça, peut-on s'attendre que l'art améliore la conduite humaine? Non, je ne crois pas. Mais il reste plutôt un des moyens pour l'atteindre.

Le fait que l'esthétique, ou bien l'aspect esthétique dans l'art, peut avoir un attrait moral, implique absolument deux fonctions de notre part, la première c'est la contemplation, la deuxième est le jugement. Parce que, si la morale existe, comment pourrions nous faire la part du bien et du mal, ainsi que du beau et du laid? Au stade de la contemplation, l'effet est à la portée de chaque personne, mais là, ce n'est qu'un état passif de la pensée. Or si la pensée entre dans le jeu, il est nécessaire que l'individu possède une certaine préparation. Cette préparation de la pensée peut nous amener à une forme de jugement. Que ce jugement soit nécessaire ou non, là n'est pas la question ni sa validité. Mais une éducation esthétique est-elle nécessaire? Si oui, en quoi peut-elle nous accomplir? Peut-on s'attendre à un accomplissement? Sûr que non, mais tout au moins une éducation esthétique peut nous montrer le chemin à prendre.

Et ici un jugement esthétique peut trouver toute sa valeur. C'est là que notre jugement esthétique peut relever l'ambiguïté si aisément discernable dans un Boticelli, ou

dans Oscar Wilde, Gide ou Dostoïevski. L'ambiguïté est basée sur une perfection renversée. Là où les valeurs morales sont remplacées ou renversées, la perfection perd de son poids. Donc, peut-on dire qu'entre le bien et le beau il y a un écart? Il peut y en avoir un, mais uniquement dans l'art et seulement quand l'art est partiellement illusoire.

Les jugements esthétiques sont relatifs à l'attitude conceptuelle du spectateur, donc les jugements esthétiques diffèrent en fonction des personnes. Le jugement d'une oeuvre d'art est en fait un processus de transaction entre les qualités objectives de l'oeuvre et le schéma psychologique et conceptuel d'une personnalité.

Soit-on se demander aussi qu'est-ce que l'art? Une émotion esthétique, préparée et commentée par l'artiste? La faiblesse et la grandeur de l'artiste? L'ivresse d'une puissance infinie de son émotion?

Ca peut être tout cela, mais de toute façon, ce n'est pas une vocation divine! C'est tout simplement une émotion esthétique. L'émotion esthétique prépare ou commémore les actes; elle ne les fait pas; quand nous l'éprouvons, nous imaginons d'emblée que les conditions d'épanouissement ont déjà été traversées et surmontées.

"La danse, l'architecture, la sculpture et la peinture contribuent avec force à une ré-crédation imaginative de l'objet." Camille Schuwer.

Remarquable vision sur la ré-crédation; attitudes et mouvements, formes, couleurs, matières soudainement animées, acquièrent par miracle plastique, une grâce, une richesse une harmonie et des raffinements qui ne manquent certes pas à la nature, mais qui ont dans l'art le privilège de la nouveauté et de l'intention significative.

Il est indéniable qu'outre les émotions qu'ils nous transmettent, ils augmentent et affinent nos possibilités sensorielles. L'oeuvre suffit par elle-même à créer des mondes. Les mondes les plus divers et les plus significatifs; le monde de Bruegel, de Rembrandt, de Delacroix, de Renoir, de Cézanne, de Klee, de Kandinsky, etc....

Combien divers, quel témoignage et quel apport à notre jugement esthétique, à notre évolution en général. Bien sûr les pessimistes peuvent encore contester cette évolution, douter de l'efficacité....c'est tout à fait légitime, on l'a vu plus haut, les deux sens de l'art, de la perfection et de l'ambiguïté. Quoi de plus normal? Quand il-y-a déviation il y a des déviationnistes. Ce n'est pas pour cela qu'il y a eu et qu'il y a encore des endroits et des circonstances où on pratique un art diragé.

Diriger un art, correspond à une situation, la situation à un système, et le système à un ordre; ordre religieux, ordre social et ordre politique. Ont-ils tort? Si le résultat final d'un art dirigé, peut amener toute la société à une unité de pensée et si cette unité de pensée correspond à la notion de liberté de pensée, alors oui!

Mais encore une fois est-ce possible? difficile à croire, ou bien l'idéalisme dépasse tout entendement (Tolstoy peut-être le croyait dans sa société à bâtir, après la conversion). La philosophie Leniniste, la Chine de Mao etc., le croient aussi, ainsi que tous les régimes totalitaires, qu'ils soient de gauche ou de droite.

Mais si à travers des spéculations paradoxales, on peut atteindre certains buts, peut-être que cela en vaut la peine, mais encore là aussi, il faut être sûr que les valeurs seront en relation directe avec le temps et l'espace. Si je voulais faire une synthèse, je crois que je pourrais la faire beaucoup plus rapidement en moins de mots et peut-être plus clairement. Mais dans ces conditions il faut le prendre autrement. Par exemple: qu'est ce que le beau? D'après Kant, c'est "un plaisir désintéressé, un universel sans concept, une finalité sans fin".

Schopenhauer dit: "Il n'y a pas à proprement parler de spécificité du beau. Les choses sont plus ou moins belles selon, qu'elles facilitent et provoquent plus ou moins la contemplation purement objective."

Selon Hegel, "le beau naturel ne saurait remplir la fonction du beau artistique."



Pour J.P. Weber "le beau se situe en clé de voûte entre Rhumbs contemplatifs purs (gracieux, poétique, ellégiague) et les Rhumbs qui enveloppent agitation ou inquiétude (dramatique, pyrique, tragique, héroïque, pathétique, sublime, grandiose)."

Le beau, pour Valery, est "ce qui désespère - le beau est-il vraiment insaisissable?".

S'il reste insaisissable, peut-on l'enseigner? Au plus haut degré, ici le sujet prend toute sa signification dans le domaine qui nous intéresse.

Essayer de tirer des conclusions rapidement et en quelques lignes serait peine perdue et travail stérile. Ce qu'il faut faire, laisser le chapitre ouvert en permanence. Chapitre ouvert à tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la matière; à tous ceux à qui leur expérience permet d'ajouter quelque chose au développement de la compréhension, de l'observation, de l'imagination et de la sensibilité. Ces quatre notions à développer nous indiquent déjà les buts à suivre dans le système de l'enseignement esthétique.

Un intérêt particulier se trouve dans le travail fait à l'occasion du congrès de Prague de L'INSEA en 1966, sur l'esthétique positive. Je l'ai mentionné plus haut et je me suis promis d'y revenir dans ma conclusion.

Les résolutions suivantes furent adoptées à l'unanimité:

L'esthétique positive est la condition d'efficacité de l'éducation artistique car:

1. Les notions et principes de l'esthétique positive constituent les éléments éventuels de la qualité artistique des créations.
2. Ces notions et principes sont la base de l'éducation plastique générale comme de l'enseignement particulier des arts; ils concernent aussi bien la création, que la compréhension, que la critique.

3. Ces notions et principes favorisent le développement de l'observation, de l'imagination, et de la sensibilité créatrice.

L'esthétique positive rend possible:

1. L'adaptation pédagogique des connaissances esthétiques à l'âge et à l'esprit des élèves de tous les niveaux.
2. L'extension de ces connaissances à d'autres domaines de l'éducation, par l'adaptation à d'autres cours (extension éducative, extrapolation, coordination).
3. Le libre choix des méthodes d'enseignement.
4. Le contact sensible avec toutes les expressions artistiques du monde entier, grâce à la mise en relief de connaissances universelles et à l'emploi d'un vocabulaire commun.

Le congrès invita les autorités ministérielles responsables de chaque pays, à inscrire au programme des études d'art et d'éducation artistique, les notions et principes de l'esthétique positive, à quelque niveau que ce soit.

En somme, qu'est-ce que l'esthétique positive, que doit-elle être?: Une méthode d'enseignement à proprement parlé, une expérience esthétique.

L'esthétique positive se tourne vers l'individuel, le social, le fonctionnel, vers l'imagination, la raison, la sensibilité, l'observation. Elle rassemble les connaissances esthétiques que les grands artistes ont mis toute une vie à découvrir. Elle contribue à rechercher les conditions d'accord entre les divers éléments structuraux physiques et psychologiques des oeuvres d'art. Elle contribue à la recherche par la méthode d'investigation scientifique.

L'investigation scientifique dans l'expérience esthétique se base sur des faits et des vérifications empiriques.

"Le critère du contenu empirique, doit se comprendre comme suggestion et non comme proposition....Son acceptation ne peut se justifier que dans la pratique, elle ne peut être validée en terme logique: Rationnalité, cohérence interne, signification."

Empirisme Logique de  
H. Feigl, 1955.

De toutes les valoritions, l'évaluation technique de l'utilisation matérielle est la seule qui ne pré-suppose pas un absolu que nous ne possédons pas, et elle est en effet l'appréciation esthétique.

La présence des ambiguïtés, l'acceptation et la minimisation; soulever le voile protecteur des concepts esthétiques (Hussain Fakhir, 1967) et là je rajouterais: sans introduire d'autres concepts, il y a possibilité de les supprimer. L'ambiguïté peut-être levée d'une manière satisfaisante en supposant des liens entre les propositions fondées sur les faits concrets.

Vérification d'un concept, sa rationalité générale et sa cohérence interne, la nature et le type de faits qu'il implique, l'étendue de la théorie, le nombre de cas qu'elle recouvre et ceux qu'elle ne recouvre pas. Qualités normatives, cadres logiques, affirmations concrètes vérifiables. Nature relationnelle, caractère historique de l'art, oeuvre, artiste, style. Les caractéristiques psychologiques de l'homme et la base du jugement esthétique, les symboles et archétypes dans l'appréciation artistique seraient donc le résultat de la satisfaction des instincts élémentaires communs à toutes les sociétés et à tous les temps.

C.G. Jung, "The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious" 1959.

Là aussi se trouve un aspect d'une grande importance, dans l'appréciation esthétique qui a été trop longtemps négligée. Une source inépuisable des éléments de recherche et d'expérimentation esthétique qui peuvent être d'un grand secours dans le jugement: Les symboles et archétypes.

Ainsi la psychologie et la sociologie, nous apportent des critères très précieux. Et malgré leur valeur et importance et le manque d'appareil à mesurer leur portée,



ces sciences, relativement nouvelles, défrichent les sentiers de la connaissance et éclairent le fonctionnement biologique, psychologique, physiologique et sociologique de l'individu et de la société.

Je voudrais rajouter au tableau tracé jusqu'à présent, quelques faits importants. Non pas pour compléter une méthode d'exploration esthétique mais par peur d'avoir oublié ce qui me semble avoir son importance au même titre que les valeurs, notions, critères et actes: L'apprentissage dans son milieu et ses connaissances (traditions, coutumes), la stabilité et sa familiarité avec les formes d'art, le fonctionnement de la machine organique fonction de nos yeux, perception, fonction des couleurs et la réaction aux couleurs, le jugement des couleurs, les lignes et les formes, conflit et curiosité.

Donc, l'expérience esthétique peut devenir un programme de connaissances ordonnées aux quelles doit répondre une certaine conception pédagogique, celle qui peut d'abord être un esprit et un environnement propice au développement de l'individu et à son évolution intellectuelle. Celle qui saura coordonner toutes les idées et tous les efforts. Celle qui doit s'opposer aux formules, à l'automatisation comme à la libre expression totale dans l'abandon. Celle qui unit connaissance et libre impulsion, éclaire la réflexion sans la contraindre, enfin elle sera ennemie de la médiocrité; son désir sera de participer à la culture, par le développement du pouvoir d'adaptation, d'action et d'invention. Elle substituera à la contemplation statique le plaisir esthétique dynamique.

Est-ce suffisant et satisfaisant comme conclusion?....J'espère très sincèrement qu'aucune conclusion ne sera jamais suffisante, encore moins satisfaisante et que toute conclusion sera sujet de critique. Ce sera la seule chance que le problème reste sujet des recherches, la seule chance d'apporter de nouvelles lumières sur les sentiers de la connaissance et de la compréhension dans le temps et l'espace.

Le temps et l'espace, on l'a déjà vu, sont des dimensions vitales de l'individu comme d'ailleurs de celle de l'objet d'art.

En tant qu'individu je n'échappe pas à ces deux dimensions, cependant je me fais un devoir, de revenir sur le sujet en temps et lieu.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO JACK BURNHAM'S

"THE STRUCTURE OF ART"

RODNEY HEATHER

Cet essai est un résumé du livre de Jack Burnham intitulé La Structure de l'Art. On y trouve les principes à la base de sa théorie ainsi que ceux de Claude Lévi-Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure et Roland Barthes. La nature et l'influence de l'histoire et l'art sont commentées et suivies, dans leurs catégories respectives, d'une intégration des principes de l'approche structurale par rapport à l'analyse de l'art contemporain.

This paper investigates the theory proposed by Jack Burnham in his book, The Structure of Art. After writing a paper in the summer of 1971 about the manner in which a sign can function in the place of an art object, my conclusion pointed directly to Burnham's work. I found that his theory demythed the myths about art while simultaneously laying the grounds to accept new ones. This basis is in art analysis and the manner in which art is expressed, and it seeks to explain the conceptual conditions behind vastly different art objects.

His theory is premised on these ideas:

Firstly, any successful form of art analysis must use the same techniques to explain all forms of art; secondly, effective art analysis must presuppose that the historical consistency of art (call it aesthetics) is due to a highly sophisticated but hidden, logical structure observed without exception by all successful artists; and finally, such a method must apply this logical structure to reveal how and in what particular sense artistic expression changes, while remaining the same. (p.3).

In order to satisfy these requirements, Burnham has devised a method of analysis which combines the Structural Anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss and semiological analysis. The method assumes that:

...the historical notion of art is based on a mythic structure (consequently logical within the confines of the structure), and that art functions as an evolving sign system with the same flexibility in the usage of signs enjoyed by any language. (p.3).

In order to proceed with art analysis, it is necessary to discuss the structure devised by Levi-Strauss for his anthropological investigations. In it, he illustrates how a ritual, myth, or totemic system is structured. The overall structure mediates

on what the physical facts of life are and what the myth hopes them to be. It is based on the fact that a myth reflects the values and aims of a society, and that the logic of the myth is unchangeable. All mythic forms:

...function conceptually as methods of mediation and transformation. Hence the ideal in art is an essential ingredient for the conceptual formulation of art. The structure of art never attains the Art Ideal -- whether this is an ideal of beauty, truth to nature, or some ideological principle; rather, it conceptually incorporates the unattainable into the making and ordering of the art itself. (p.3).

Thus the aim of the paper is to discuss The Structure of Art. In order to understand the nature and functioning of the structural aspects of the theory, works by) Claude Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky are examined. These structural aspects are then integrated in the method of Structural Analysis. In analyzing the work of art with this method, we see how:

...art history and the creation of art are mutually supportive activities, each representing the structural inversion of the other, so that in effect art history is the intellectual justification of the art myth. (p.5).

## PART 1

One of the premises of the theory is found in the Structural Anthropology of Levi-Strauss. This is that, "unconscious mental processes remain fixed for all cultures." In his structure he defines the mind as a receiving and transmitting object which



operates in a coded form while unconsciously adhering to the conventions of society in which it originates. The means of communication is the myth itself, since myths represent collective thought or what a society thinks about itself. Myths, insofar as they are stories, at the same time are exact ideas of man in relation to his environment. While having no practical function, myth is the basis of transcendental objectivity -- the ideal by which one attains goals in life. This striving for the ideal is similar to the creative impulse with which artists strive to create art objects. While myth is an object, something self-contained, it does not have the status of a primary object or an art object. Rather, it has the status of a secondary object. When this primary-secondary concept is related to painting we find that colors appear in nature and have no communicative effectiveness by themselves: they exist in paintings because they exist on colored objects. In order to be treated as primary objects, they have to be separated from their natural associations and treated as elements in an independent system. (p.8).

For art to be understood, it relies upon two simultaneously connected systems:

The first is based on the viewer's capacity to organize sense experiences, and the second is based on a learned system of plastic values. In a viewer's mind, both modify and supplement one another as complementary aspects of a single system of perception. (p.9).

When we compare calligraphic painting to abstract art, we find that two mutually dependent terms, language and painterly expressiveness exists in Oriental calligraphic painting, whereas abstract art has dropped the first half of signification, namely language, and relies upon art history, criticism, and biography for its expressiveness. Hence, abstract art depends upon culturalized secondary levels of meaning and is not a language of expression in itself. According to Levi-Strauss, it is decoration and has no semiotic significance, only historical significance. (p.9).

The making of art is also based on a system of relationships between event and structure, or act and concept. Levi-Strauss observes that:

...both science and magic demand conceptual order; the order that science imposes upon entities is generally conceived to be systematic and concerned with physical similarities, while that of magic adheres to a form of order which meets "intellectual requirements." (p.9).

This implies that magic is reasonable because it is believed. Science on the other hand is reasonable because of the physical cause and effect relationships that it can demonstrate. Repetition is to magic what verification is to science. They are both complete systems of thought but magic is more dependent upon perception and imagination, while science extends into abstract levels of order. Combined, they are the single system behind art.

Burnham shows how he is at odds with Levi-Strauss on this last point. He uses Levi-Strauss's example of the bricoleur and the engineer. The bricoleur in French is a handyman who uses any form or material to satisfy any notion or act. The scientist gives form to function or meaning, while the bricoleur gives meaning to form. The mythmaker is like the bricoleur in that he uses whatever he needs in order to satisfy the structure of the myth. The mythmaker uses signs which are both neutral and active. The mythmaker is limited to the fact that most signs already possess certain implication within a mythic structure -- signs being materials, colors, shapes, or other qualities which may be freely manipulated, but which have implicated and recognized associations. (p.10).

According to Levi-Strauss, scientific structures are outside normal social experiences, scientific signs are detached from events. This is impossible and Burnham uses semiological analysis to show how the two components of the sign group, event and structure, are essential for meaning to occur. The idea of an artist guilding up structures through events and the scientist doing the reverse is methodologically impossible. The difference between science and art probably lies in

science being a more sophisticated mythic form. (p.11).

In order to gain an accurate description of how art functions, a discussion of totemism is essential. For primitive man:

...totemism expresses the totality of relationships between culture and nature. . . As is constantly the case with art, the logic of totemism is a kaleidoscope of images and patterns where reflections are equivalent to real objects, that is, in which signs assume the status of things signified. . . Totemic systems are consistent systems of metaphor that unify the natural environment with society. Totems define rules of behavior reflected in the properties of totemic relationships. Totemism, like art, has no set rules, intrinsic characteristics, or prescribed materials; its function is to guarantee the convertibility of ideas between different levels of social reality.

(p.11).

The fundamental dichotomy expressed in The Structure of Art is that of nature and culture. Culture represents all aspects of forms created through or by man. Everything falling outside the realm of culture or man belongs to nature. In practice, totemism is the means for answering existential questions such as "who am I" and "who are the people around me". It conceptualizes social relationships. According to Levi-Strauss, in nature including primitive man, all species are alike: members of a tribe lack personal identity. Culture is the conceptual means for giving man a personal identity. Primitive man uses totemism to distinguish himself from others in his group and from other species. By systematically associating members of his group with animal species, he gives himself a sign that separates him from other sets. Thus the various species in nature are used to define men in culture. Art, on the other hand, functions by naturalizing any entity natural or cultural for use as a subject. (p. 12).

On the level of ritual, Levi-Strauss evolves a principle which is not only behind the structure of



ritual but is also a precondition for making art. In this principle, the system of natural species and that of manufactured objects are interrelated so that there is no opposition between the natural and the cultural aspects. Levi-Strauss describes a marriage myth which involves a girl without a mother and is thus an unnatural product of an all male tribe. Being allowed to marry, a husband is formed of various tribal artifacts in the shape of a buffalo. The marriage is based on a buffalo (natural), a woman (mediating idea), and a set of objects (manufactured or cultural). The husband represents an imprecise mixture of effects which remain both external to and yet within the man's control. The buffalo or husband is imprecise in being a natural man or a cultural man, and it is this imprecision which is artistically important, since the idea of mediating is made manifest by it.

As proved in the last few decades, art may assume any form or be made in any way; the factoring process is not central to the creation of art. Yet the structural significance of the fabricating process vis-à-vis time and the consistency of what is selected is immensely important.

Intrinsically, works of art are devoid of meaning; as signs their meaning lies in becoming a segment of a larger context, that referential system which we elliptically refer to as the history of art. Art's unifying order exists in how the artist reassembles signs within a structure which produces the sense of mediation (art) for him. Linguistically, art's effectiveness depends upon its surface "vagueness", which is not meant in the sense of a lack of focus, but rather in the artist's success in shifting our minds from an empirical level of comprehension to the mythic. (p.13).

This signifies that any art object has an adjustable thread which enables the viewer to focus on it from the most abstract plane to the most concrete, from the most cultural to the most natural. Hence, myth, ritual, and

totemism in art not only move laterally in terms of linking contemporary events and structures, but also vertically with relation to past and future events.

Another important contributor to this structural theory of art is Ferdinand de Saussure. Through his principles of semiology, he established the first concrete method for analyzing the materials of speech. Saussure structured language as:

...being divided into a series of psychological entities called signs, each being composed of two parts: a concept and a sound-image. These are transposed into the respective terms "signified" and "signifier" which denote an interconnected whole. . . Signs used in language have to be arbitrary or unfixed in meaning; also the sound element of the signifier must exist in time.

Saussure notes particularly the axiom that "use defines meaning" in language. He also characterizes language as "speech without sound". Thus the "signifier is to the signified as speech is to language". In relation to the oppositional categories devised by Levi-Strauss, signifier and speech are natural elements while signified and language are cultural elements.

(p.17).

Signs according to Saussure are characterized by their ambiguous fixed/unfixed and static/temporal nature. When they are studied at a particular moment in time, they are in the field of "synchronic linguistics", and when they are studied through time, they are known as "diachronic linguistics". These terms, synchronic and diachronic, are adopted by Levi-Strauss to specify cultures with mythic structures and a sense of their own history. Saussure's example of synchrony and diachrony is the game of chess. Chessmen and their positions on the board correspond to linguistic terms. While the rules of language or chess are fixed, the shifting of a sign or the move on the board affects that single component. Simultaneously, the entire context for that move shifts and reveals a new structure

of meaning. Hence, outside the game of chess, individual pieces have no value. All pieces take their value from their rank and position in a given game. In much the same way, the "value" of a work of art cannot be separated from its "concrete reality" in the history of art. (p.18).

Another important aspect of Saussurean principles in relation to the structural anthropology of Levi-Strauss is the idea of "syntagmatic" units, or word groups with associative (or systematic) units in opposition to one another. According to Saussure:

...words in a linear series produce their values vis-à-vis one another through contrast and association. Syntagm is usually a term which acquires value only because it stands in opposition to everything that preceeds or follows it, or to both. Associative relations on the other hand are word units which have grammatical or lexical affinities while possessing no definite order as to the way they appear relative to one another. In the Natural-Cultural dichotomy established by Levi-Strauss, the syntagm (or unrelated series of oppositional elements) is always natural, while the associative (system or sets of related elements) is always cultural. Thus in language, the logic of mythic structures is always present; syntagmatic and systematic terms are constantly linked to produce signs, which in turn are recombined to produce new meanings. (pp.18-19).

One other important principle in Saussurean analysis is the role of "motivated and unmotivated" terms. In semiology, motivation implies that a syntagmatic unit may be analyzed culturally or that a systematic unit may be grouped with associated units as part of a cultural series. Motivated terms account for the illusion that art is timely and logically directed. Art that tends towards motivated terms is based on meanings already learned, while art based on unmotivated terms is expressive by means of signifiers



that gain meaning afterwards through aesthetic ideologies. (p.19).

Another important contributor to the theory of art is Roland Barthes. He maintains that:

...language must remain as the focus of analysis of any social code; thus all iconic messages have their social equivalents in verbal form (obvious examples are art criticism, scholarly analysis, and art history). . . Interpretive language, stemming from the signifying system itself, provides a wealth of clues to the hidden social meanings and values behind all such forms of communication. (p.20).

Barthes employs the same dichotomic form that typifies the efforts of Levi-Strauss and Saussure, Thus, where  $\rightleftharpoons$  means "analogous to," one finds:

<u>Natural</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>Speech</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>Image</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>Form</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>Signifier</u>
<u>Cultural</u>		<u>Language</u>		<u>Concept</u>		<u>Content</u>		<u>Signified</u>

The perceived in the above sets of terms is the signifier, while its ideational, linguistic counterpart is the signified. Thus the sign or set of "image" and "concept" assumes a dual form:

<u>Image</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>A mental picture of the object</u>
<u>Concept</u>		<u>A mental list of the object's formal qualities</u>

The Natural-Cultural dichotomy can be reduced to terms denoting social equivalents:

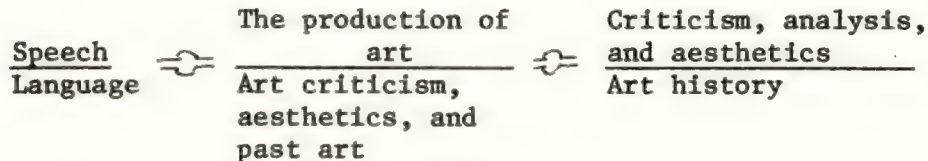
<u>Natural</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>Individual</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>Selection</u>	$\rightleftharpoons$	<u>Usage</u>
<u>Cultural</u>		<u>Society</u>		<u>Values</u>		<u>System</u>

In his principles, Barthes stresses the contractual nature of language and speech:

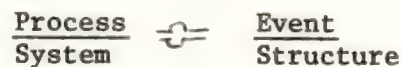
Since speech is the active day-to-day use of language, shifts in language occur because of the evolution of speech patterns. Speech on the other hand derives its powers of communication from the unconscious rules of language as

they evolve historically. . . A language is at the same time the product and the instrument of speech; their relationship is therefore a genuinely dialectical one. (p.21).

Thus there is a definite set of relationships in the art world ordering the semiological hierarchy:



It follows that in regard to Levi-Strauss's distinction between art and science, event is always integral to structure as in:



Thus, where  $\Leftrightarrow$  means "smaller than," one sees that:

As a result, the temporal condition of a sign is always synchronic, reducing all processes and events to ideal points in time. Hence it follows that all signs resist history, functioning outside the passage of time. Signs representing historical events exist as incremental marks on a temporal line. In art history, historians choose events which are then placed hierarchically: the event of a painting the event of a series of paintings a period in the artist's development the artist's entire work a stylistic era the era as part of the history of art. History is the most encompassing sign. (p.21).

Barthes makes semiological distinctions between the "signified" and the "signifier."

The signified is a concept or mental representation of the "thing". Signifiers are inseparable counterparts of signifieds in forming signs; sounds, objects,

images, colors, gestures, and other purely sensory phenomena are lexical elements which signify. Signifiers are separated within a semiological system according to the part they perform at a given level.

In semiological systems, the issue of motivated and unmotivated signs is unclear to Barthes. Motivated signs according to Burnham, consist of analogies between signifier and signified where parts of a sign system seem to have an unlearned or intrinsically logical relation to each other. Hence there can be many signs which are relatively motivated or impure. This is the case with art and other iconographical systems. (p.22).

Burnham cites the example of Van Gogh in which yellow is used in a contextual manner (compositional and thus motivated) on one level, related to the concept of a sunflower on another, and also relatively motivated through knowledge of Van Gogh's disposition for yellow. Hence Van Gogh's work exists on a number of planes of association. He compells motivated and unmotivated aspects of a single signifier to function as several different signs. (p.23).

Burnham also deduces from Barthes semiology that in art systems the motivated is naturalized and the unmotivated is culturalized, and comes to the conclusion that formalist techniques are used to culturalize the unmotivated or natural. This in Van Gogh's work:

...yellow is naturally identified with sunflowers but is not attached to the color violet. Only a language of art, Formalism, could emphasize colors for their own sake. (p.23).

Naturalization of a motivated sign takes place when it is used as part of a culturally established sign system.

Signs which have their correspondences with things perceived in nature are clearly motivated. Naturalistic painting and sculpture is the extensive use of motivated signs. Iconographical studies account for the most organized and documented analyses of motivated signs. Such signs,



including language used in art, provide culture with valuable sources of self-definition. Thus as a rule in art, motivated signs play the part of culturally established sign systems, while unmotivated signs serve as esthetically imposed sign systems, the second always trying to achieve the legitimacy of the first.

Equally significant is the relationship of motivated and unmotivated signs to the history of art. . . Motivated signs give us associational references to contemporary ideas and images which are always transformed into art. This provides a portion of the "plane of content" for some but not all nonobjective styles of art. Art is equally the result of . . . the artists' ability to organize subject matter into a personal handwriting. Where this is destroyed or reduced to ambiguous dialectical oppositions, the ability to "think art" is soon lost. (pp. 23-24).

Two concepts in semiological analysis which have their counterparts in art are "syntagmatic and systematic" relationships. Syntagmatic relationships have an affinity with the juxtaposed ordering of very different combinations of words, as in speech, while systematic relations are concerned with orderly relationships among words and their syntax, as in language. In speech and language, the two concepts interact to create a substitute set of structural relationships. On the syntagmatic plane, certain signifiers can be exhausted through their connection with related signifieds. In speech and language this never occurs, but it does occur in avant-garde art. When certain forms of expression (the syntagm) are used up, worn out from overuse, art becomes dependent upon fewer and fewer systematic relationships. As less is permissible in avant-garde art, the artist is compelled to use expressive elements in his art that bear little meaning in the structural articulation of art. In this way, randomness becomes incorporated into art work as an expressive feature and it signifies a lack of concern with the notion of choice systems.

Most early formal innovation grew out of transforming the content of an object before analysis so that the system

and syntagm failed to follow an expected sequence. Such transgressions reveal that:

...signifiers are progressively more detached from systematization, and that signifieds lose their meaning and become detached from the traditional art context. On the planes of syntagm-system, syntagms gradually lose their legibility and systems are reduced to increasingly inflexible sets of rules. So every significant innovation in contemporary art demands not only a cultural readjustment of the syntagm-system to a degree where normalized art is possible again, but also a mutual interaction between syntagm and system.

(p.25).

Analysis of modern art is impossible without the use of the "staggered system" that is used in semiology on two or more levels. The first level signs compose the "real system," or that set of activities and art propositions which are combined to form the immediate substance of the work of art. The second level is composed of the first level reduced to the object and its semiological meaning.

#### CONNOTATIVE

1st	signifier-signified	
2nd	signifier	signified
3rd	signifier : rhetoric      signified : ideology	

#### METALANGUAGE

1st	signifier-signified	
2nd	signifier	signified
3rd	signifier : rhetoric      signified : ideology	

Burnham gives this description of the staggered system:

In the first example of the staggered system

(connotative), the primary level is where a sign (signifier and signified) is used as the plane of expression (signifier) for a second system. This is called a connotative system because the first level is usually signified by language, which then connotes the second level. On the first level, the signifier is the visual image of a printed text, while the signified is the meaning of the text. The second level in such a structure is usually the "content" or idea which provides a frame of reference for the second-level signifier, the art object itself. The second level of a connotative system connotes the third level whose signifier thus functions as a language-object for examining the lower levels of the system. The opposite of a connotative system is a metalanguage, a two level system whose plane of content or signified is in itself a semiotic system. All forms of nonobjective art are metalanguages, while the readymade and some Conceptual Art are connotative systems. For nonobjective art, "painterly expressiveness" and formal innovation can serve as content for a second level of signification; consequently metalanguages in art are the expression of an art activity (connotative and/or physical) as a proposition about art; the personal circumstances, gestures, and emotive intentions behind a painting become its *raison d'être*. As denoted meaning, this level of signification may be raised to a third level of connotated signification through language, that is criticism or an art text. Here the motivating aesthetic behind a style or a movement is encapsulated in writings which in turn are open to examination as a signifier.

In either connotative systems or metalanguages, structure may serve as expression or content of a still higher system. This is a repeatable process embodying the historical-empirical principle of transcendancy which is the basis



of every system of signification. Potentially every semiological system can be incorporated into a new system. All revolutionary scientific paradigms do precisely this. But in art, this capping process assumes a different form. For example, old media may be incorporated into new media; form becomes content as is the case with Pop Art and particularly Roy Lichtenstein . . . The second method of capping works of art results when new methods are employed to analyse art theory itself -- the present study is such an example. (p.26).

The last item that needs to be considered in this section is the concept of art history as a mythic form:

One mechanism by which myths operate in art history is the "genre concept," or the means of classification which isolates artistic events into groups and sub-groups for ease of handling. Style as such acts as a kind of fulcrum between the art object and art history. It mediates the monolithic concept of art history through an infinite number of events and objects which comprise the historical ideal. (p.39).

As shown in the chart, diachronic time encompasses a multitude of events that fuse with one another and overlap so that no physical or self-apparent distinctions are possible. As a result, it enables synchronic cultures to operate on their mythic basis and hence produce art. When the new art objects are discovered, they are incorporated into the concepts of "object, style, and history".

#### Historical-Mythic Structures in Art Through Diachronic-Synchronic Synthesis

SYNCHRONIC TIME	DIACHRONIC TIME	SYNCHRONIC TIME	DIACHRONIC TIME	SYNCHRONIC TIME
art history	series of styles	style	series of art objects	art object
history	series of eras	historical era	series of events in archives	event

When a radical style is created, an adjustment is made to incorporate it into history. As is the case with the readymade, it is defined as a new stylistic concept, and leaves the other styles undisturbed.

Fundamental to the mythic form of art history is the practice whereby all objects are regarded as completely unique. Works of art may neither be divided nor multiplied, although they may relate to other works serially or cyclically. This is true of styles which become linear segments in the span of historical time. In theory it is impossible for objects to occupy the same space in time or place. In a like sense, styles ideally function in sequential fashion. Modern art represents something of a contradiction. Since Impressionism, the plurality of styles has increased to where perhaps a half dozen styles are practiced and accepted concurrently in the art world. (p.40).

It is also interesting to note that there can be only one art history, since a second would produce conflicting mythic structures. Thus all art objects have esthetic merit because they originate as elements of one mythic form or another whether they are recent anthropological discoveries or art objects of recent movements. (p.41).

## PART 2

The structural approach to art is an attempt to affirm that art operates on the basis of conceptual relationships. In doing so, it operates on a scheme of logic. The syntagm-system relationship of iconic works is the means for defining the conceptual basis of art objects.

Until the 19th century, all art was religious in that it served the church. During the Renaissance the religious rapport through the medium of objects diminished and the representation of religious ideals gave way to thinly disguised depictions of the real world. During the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, the academies promoted historical and mythological themes in that they referred to events which are mythic, hence proper material for art. In the 19th century the activities of artists were recognized as comprising of substance of myth. The invention of photography in the 19th century encouraged a tendency away from realism which had been the goal of artists for centuries. The invention of the camera obscura led the way towards abstraction in that the camera taught artists how to flatten spaces, eliminate shadows, and how to compose forms in strange gestural poses. Even though photographic realism has been proven to depend upon visual cues innately abstract as any primitive or modern art, the mechanics of abstraction have been defined by such psychologists of esthetics as Rudolf Arnheim to include the formalist or atomistic approach to visual reconstruction by decomposing "pictorial vision into balance, shape, form, growth, space, light, color, movement, tension, and expression". Perceptual explanations such as this never reveal the origins of artistic transformation which is called abstraction. They presume that all depictions of reality are abstract except reality itself. In Levi-Strauss's terms:

Artists paint pictures not because they are "good to see" but rather because they are "good to think". Works of art are totems which systematically define themselves by their associations with other works. These relationships are perceptual habits which enable us to embody some aspect of outer reality in the objects seen. Thus mechanical and aerial perspective, local color, shape, relationships, figure-ground construction, body-object associations, and the making and



conceptualization of art are all incorporated into the totemic structure. What we think of as "Modern Art" is simply the tradition of discarding these conventions one by one. Art is a system which allows for the assimilation or rejection of any kind of content, providing the encoding is accomplished through the rules of historical innovation. . . Artists uniquely systematize certain relationships within a work of art, while dropping or neutralizing other systems. The substrata for all formal relationships are the mimetic conventions listed above; all avant-garde art attempts to depart from the means of realistic duplication, that is photographic illusionism. . . Hence historical pressure eventually forces most artists to attempt to disrupt the heterogeneity of the syntagmatic plane, thus altering the normal "speech patterns" of art. (p.46).

There is another way in which artists transgress the pattern of development on the syntagmatic plane. This has occurred in the later stages of modernist art in which the syntagmatic plane has been completely dominated by the cultural decision. The concept of the readymade introduced by Duchamp has no system to it, instead the object determines the paradigmatic plane in its entirety.

The Formal conventions and the concept of the readymade constitute the two types of "transgression" known in art, formal transgression and historical transgression. In Formalism, the subject matter such as composition, figure-ground relationships, color, scale, and tactile values are all accepted as a means of transgressing normal art. Formal transgressions are based on literary and plastic innovation which perpetuate the illusion of historical change. Historical transgressions on the other hand are essentially structural disruptions that destroy the illusion that art progresses from one stage to the next through time. In the case of Duchamp, his works were far ahead of

their time historically and remained unexplained for some time. Another way art historically transgresses is to break out of the barriers of the art myth through its deliberate non-uniqueness, or dialectical use of seriality. Another way still is through works of art which focus on the time element in order to reduce or negate it to a finite duration, since works of art function as points on the time continuum. Daniel Buren with his "banners" and Les Levine with his "non-objects" are in this category.

Thus before 1870, avant-gardism was a matter of individual temperament and idiosyncrasy. With Impressionism, the programmatic and collective aspects of formal transgressive behavior began to exert themselves. From about 1910, the beginning of Non-Objective art, art historical consciousness begins. The subsequent realization of the art historical myth begins to appear through Linguistic Conceptualism about 1967 and shortly after, consciousness reaches saturation. (p.47).

### PART 3

In the course of this paper, Burnham's Structure of Art proposed that Levi-Strauss's convention of Natural/Cultural opposition represents the fundamental diachotomy mediated by myth. All activities, concepts, and linguistic divisions discussed may be divided into either one or the other. (Chart below).

#### Natural

Synchronic time  
Continuous elements  
All elements as they  
are found in nature  
(a continuum without  
differentiation)

#### Cultural

Diachronic time  
Discrete elements  
Classification of elements  
into conceptually useful  
systems (as a series of  
sets)

## Levi-Strauss

Female	Male
That which is a signifier (noise, color, line, spoken words, etc.)	That which is signified (language, specific form, tonality, singing, etc.)
Syntagm (contrasts)	Paradigm or system (relationships)
Speech	Language
Connotation	Denotation

## Barthes

Phoneme : lexicological units	Morpheme : grammatical units
Unmotivated signs	Motivated signs
Plane of expression	Plane of content
Work	Reward

In general, the above chart consists of categories for the purposed of making linguistical, semiological, and anthropological analysis. The chart below is made of slightly different divisions more applicable to the planning, making, perceiving, and situating works of art. By defining a work's signifiers and signifieds in their proper order, the first step toward reconciling the opposition between physical reality and the esthetic ideals employed by a work of art is performed.

Natural

All "real" physical entities  
Assertion of the artist's  
activities  
Continuous time  
Movement within the work  
(either suggested by the  
artist's activities or  
the subject matter)  
Ground  
Emotion  
Mixed series, contrasts,  
and random units  
Environmental  
(unperceived whole)

Cultural

The decision as concept  
Assertion of the viewer's  
perception  
The instant (no time)  
Fixed positions within the  
work  
  
Figure  
Meaning  
The unit, object, and sets of  
oppositions within a system  
Antienvironmental  
(perceived parts of the whole)

(It is likely that there are oppositions not included in this chart).



The reason for art analysis is to determine where and how the cultural aspects of art are naturalized and the natural aspects are culturalized, since all successful art integrates both effects as equally and fully as possible. Whereas all signs are divided into cultural and natural terms, cultural terms culturalize their natural counterparts and natural terms naturalize the cultural. Where either does not clearly occur, the art may be culturalized or naturalized on the ideological plane, or its structure may remain ambiguous, or it may not function as art at all.

In going about structural analysis, a modified chart of Burnham's is used. This is done for two reasons:

First, analysis of art is both horizontal and vertical, including many styles and approaches in time. Second, it seems important to decompose signifiers and signifieds (natural and cultural elements) in artists' work, because in many instances these are by no means superficially evident. (p. ).

Hence, the two "Real Systems" are A and B below.

(p.52).

B	SIGNIFIER: Content	SIGNIFIED: Artist's intention	Plane of content
	Making process	Logical relation	Plane of expression
A	Content	Artist's intention	Plane of content
	Making process	Logical relation	Plane of expression

Signifiers and signifieds in the Real System must relate in two specific ways:

First, there must be a direct causal relationship between the signifiers and their signifieds. Second, there must be a firm relation through analogy between signifiers and signifieds of the two planes. . . . Where a Metalanguage or Denotative Systems substitutes for the missing Plane of Content or Plane of Expression, then it takes the place of the missing plane in the structural equation. Thus there is an analogous but not equal relation between the Plane of Content and the Plane of Expression.

$$\frac{\text{Signified (content)}}{\text{Signifier (content)}} \rightleftharpoons \frac{\text{Signified (expression)}}{\text{Signifier (expression)}}$$

The above equation for the Real System represents the Natural (Empirical) on the left side and the Cultural (Esthetic) on the right. Making, and the assertion of circumstances about the work outside itself can always be reconstituted through this equation. (p.55).

The equation is derived from the Klein Group mathematics developed twenty years ago which Levi-Strauss used independently for defining kinship relations and mythic forms. Klein Groups are four-part structures which allow for consistent permutations derived from one or two operations on a single function. Hence Content (C) Expression (E), which follows that one or more planes of content are equivalent to one or more planes of expression from which comes the equation:

$$\frac{\text{Signified (content)}}{\text{Signifier (content)}} \rightleftharpoons \frac{\text{Signified (expression)}}{\text{Signifier (expression)}}$$

(p.56).

## PART 4

We come to the point where we have to ask the question of what value is the approach to analyzing art object. The rationale for the theory has been discussed and there are more authors than those discussed here whose work supports the structural approach of Burnham, namely, Jean Piaget, Marcel Duchamp, Morse Peckham, Anton Ehrenzweig, and Noam Chomsky. The direct contribution of these people to Burnham's work is material for another essay. But if this is a theory of value, what makes it so?

It grows out of the instigation of art which has been shown to evolve from language structures. As such, it is not a theory of analysis for particular styles of art with philosophical grounding in Imitationalism, Formalism or Emotionalism. Rather, it bridges all forms of artistic expression and explains the conceptual conditions behind the existence of art objects. In this way, it circumscribes the effective content of art.

As Burnham notes, "the conscious realization of the art historical myth began to appear through Linguistical Conceptualism in 1967 or 1968," and with it, the evolution of a systematic style to succeed Minimalism and Pop Art did not come about. Instead, the style of art shifted to a deeper level of meaning to where the conception of art began to embrace questions like, what is it to make art, what does an artist do, and how do you know what art is, and leave questions behind like, what is a good painting. For the first time in the history of art, a theory of analysis is required to answer questions of intention and identity of the object without having to resort to descriptions of shock value and formal analysis.

When analyzing art objects which come under a categorical style, we simply apply an analytical approach established and proven by use. What do we do when we have art objects that require analysis of



some sort to be understood and yet have no category in which to place them? Consider art objects such as trenches dug in the desert (De Maria), the gradual removal of strips from a vacant lot (Levine), and piles of folded felt (Morris). None of the previously mentioned art objects can be analyzed according to traditional Formalistic or Expressionistic theory. They may contain attributes which align them under one category or the other but the art objects still remain essentially undefined. The only manner in which these art objects can be considered is as a heightened perceptual experience. Perception, as the term denotes, does not proceed from an idea, but from pragmatic consideration of intention, effect, and consequence of experience.

Work such as a pile of earth on a museum floor (Coward), longitudinal and latitudinal lines marked by tape on a gallery floor (Vazan), demand an area larger than that used by the Dadaist, Surrealists or any other art movement. It has to be an area that extends beyond object making and into a series of possibilities or alternatives. In such a broad area of imaginative choice, the criteria of analysis of style fail to deal with quality differentiations in art forms predicated on variability and discontinuity. The analytical criteria for such art as well as any other are not adherence to categorical imperatives, but rather the variety of experience and the range of perception offered. Hence, the necessity for an approach in order to be able to come to grips with all forms of art is clear.

For the first time in the history of art, the role of the artist is logically concluded to be that he do original work. The cry for originality is not new. I suspect that all students and all artists alike practised a style of one dominant artist or another at the beginning of their own artistic evolution, selecting key characteristics of the style and recombining them in a new arrangement, reversing

the choices of selection and combination in their work until they evolved their own original style. This notion dissolves with the dawning of art historical consciousness since any similarity of an object by one artist to that of another renders the art objects as categorically derived from the same idea, ergo unoriginal.

Art historical consciousness has sent artists into a perpetual state of radical change. The innovative qualities of making and forming stemming from the physical characteristics of materials while allowing randomness to enter the forming process has oriented the style of art to change from one piece to the next. This state of change is marked by the re-introduction of time simultaneously evolving on the path of art history. Since all art prior to 1967-1968 evolved outside of art history and caught up with it later, it was in a state of radical change longer than current art. The synchronic and diachronic features of the structural approach to art enables both current and past art to be analyzed in their perspectives.

Eight years ago, a teacher of mine discussed the notion that he believed that each of us who makes art is God. As reported in the news media about his exhibition two years ago, this teacher had forsaken the notion of artists playing God by using in an art series, the discarded gloves of construction men. This simple gesture runs parallel to the demythification of art since 1967-1968. Involved in working with these gloves, the making of art signaled to Roy Kiyooka that there is no separation of art from something of a readymade nature. Depending on the relative status of the readymade, it only has to be naturalized or culturalized, whatever the case may be, made by someone who identifies himself as the maker. What results is expression by laymen unfamiliar with art, the form of their expression being the content.

This definition of art coincides with the notion of motivated and unmotivated aspects of art. Motivation behind the art object carries significant meaning and is not found in the formal analysis of the object. Motivation

as put forward by De Saussure is in opposition to the arbitrary. All art of historical importance and much of recent art removes the arbitrary from the making of art and replaces it with the motivated or non-arbitrary so that the structural relationships in art objects are either based on chance ordering as in the work of Marcel Duchamp or the logical and systematic ordering as in the physiological precesses of nature. The "forms" to be found in the art work, therefore, are in the activity of making and carry much of the motivation, if not all, for the making of the art object.

As Marshall McLuhan has pointed out, the Western World is becoming tribalized. Our forms of behavior created by new technologies are aimed at exploring and testing the new environments in a pragmatic and ritualistic fashion. No more do we separate the end product from the means. The distinct structural mode of behavior that we employ in making an art object has become, through our awareness of ourselves, a form in itself that is intrinsically tied to the art object. Contemporary art is ingrossed in a complex of interactions involving the artist as a physical/mind complex with the physical laws and materials of the universe. The structural approach to art analysis is derived from such behavior and can define with an understanding never before generated, man's relation to his art.



TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A

PERSONAL APPROACH

TO AESTHETIC EDUCATION

E. BRUCE CLARK

L'intention de cet article est d'explorer les idées de plusieurs écrivains dans le Journal of Aesthetic Education, afin de mieux définir, selon les préférences de l'auteur, en quoi consiste l'Education Esthétique. Le point le plus important pour l'éducation en général est de reconnaître que par l'étude phénoménologique de l'esthétique on peut, en utilisant les principes psychologiques de la perception, aider à développer chez les étudiants des chemins vers la connaissance aussi valable que ceux suivis par la science.

In making a commitment to education, it would seem that a necessary, although not sufficient, condition of such commitment be that of having some personal philosophy by which one hopes to regulate his teaching behavior. Why should this be deemed a necessity? Because, to be without a well-defined sense of personal direction and purpose (i.e., personal philosophy), whatever its nature, be it existential, amoral, aesthetic, ethical or hedonistic, implies an inability on the part of the teacher to provide for the student a coherent and consistent example of intellectual behavior against which to gauge his own development. And why is this condition not sufficient? Because, for one thing, it makes no reference to content or to subject matter. A teacher with a fully developed philosophical stance but without sufficient subject information and development could hardly be expected to play his role with any degree of success.

Having expended time and effort on the acquisition of the academic qualifications and practical training necessary to teach his subject, Fine Art, this writer was disturbed by the realization that knowing something about his subject was not a sufficient criterion for teaching. A commitment to purveying art techniques seemed hardly adequate in itself to demonstrate in any cogent fashion certain attitudes and concepts which had arisen from reading the works of some writers on education and art, John Dewey being prominent among them. In Dewey's pragmatic approach to general education, combined with his apparent conviction that art as an area of human activity is eminently related to knowledge,<sup>1</sup> there has been found so much food for thought by serious scholars of art and education, that a whole body of investigation has developed around it. Much of the research and opinion in this area over the past few years has found expression in a journal published by the University of Illinois Press under the editorship of Ralph A. Smith, called The Journal of Aesthetic Education.

In order to explore as fully as possible the philosophy

supporting the educational concept generally known as Aesthetic Education, a thorough reading of the above journal was undertaken. All available issues of the journal, dating from 1968 to the present, were studied from the specific points of view of Art Education and Philosophy of Aesthetics in order to attempt to corral within a recognized scholarly enclosure my own rather unruly concepts and to render them more manageable.

First of all, what is Aesthetic Education? According to Bennett Reimer, "Aesthetic education...(is) the development of sensitivity to the aesthetic qualities of things."<sup>2</sup> In like vein, D.W. Gotshalk says "The aim (in aesthetic education) is not to celebrate masterpieces, to promulgate art doctrine, to teach art history, but to awaken and enlarge the aesthetic response of individuals."<sup>3</sup> Taken superficially, these statements sound rather emotional, and seem to have very little to do with education per se. But it must be understood that while there is considerable disagreement as to the How of Aesthetic Education, there is an underlying principle as to the Why which permeates all the writings. This Why can most simply be expressed as a desire to educate, to expand and increase an individual's intellectual capacities and fund of knowledge both about himself and about his total environment. A second-hand quote from Alfred North Whitehead via Arnold Berleant loses nothing in the handling.

"What education has to impart is an intimate sense of the power of ideas, for the beauty of ideas, and for the structure of ideas, together with a particular body of knowledge which has peculiar reference to the life of the being possessing it."<sup>4</sup>

What Whitehead had to say about the power, the beauty and the structure of ideas can be said to find their apogee in Aesthetic Education.

In order to discover whether knowledge can indeed be imparted through Aesthetic Education, let us briefly



invade the sacred domain of "true" knowledge, science, to investigate how scientists acquire their knowledge. It can be stated without fear of contradiction that one of the primary sources of scientific fact-finding leading to theory formation is via the senses, through direct perception of phenomena. Newton's accident with the apple is a case in point. A doctor may decide by looking at your tongue, taking your temperature, and poking you in the right side that you are suffering from acute appendicitis. In this case he has accumulated enough sense-data which, coupled with his experience, allows him to arrive at a conclusion which is likely to be accurate. As pointed out by Arnold Berleant, "...it is experience which dictates the appropriate theoretical structures, meanings, and operations."<sup>5</sup>

The domain of art is equally subject to the structures of sensory perception. Neither painting nor music, poetry nor dance would have any significance for man were it not that he perceives them through one or a combination of his senses. In this phenomenological sense, it would seem that there can be no difference between perceiving a painting and drawing conclusions from what we perceive in relation to past experiences with like paintings, and the case of the aforementioned doctor. Berleant's attitude to the phenomenological validity of aesthetic investigation is expressed in this way:

"...aesthetics must construct conceptual tools which derive directly from aesthetic experience. It must formulate ideas which return to clarify and enhance our future experience by helping us to recognize, order and respond to it in ways that are appropriate to the phenomena. The pattern of inquiry in aesthetics, then, is no different from the pattern of inquiry in any other cognitive discipline."<sup>6</sup>

Repeated use of the "must" in the above quotation gives a clue to the problems inherent in any discussion about aesthetics, which have in turn affected aesthetic

education. There has arisen, since the time of Plato, a multitude of theories about art and aesthetics, each seeking to establish itself as the definitive answer to the problem and thereby negating all the others. Grouped according to similarities, there result five main aesthetic theories; art as imitation, emotionalism, formalism, symbolism and expressionism. While offering some elements of truth, each of these theories can be shown to be insufficient because it cannot accommodate some form of art which has undeniable aesthetic qualities, or because it is self-serving, meaning that it attributes to works of art qualities required for its substantiation which do not in fact inhere in the works. It should be pointed out that works of art embody no meaning, no message, no value other than as objects for perception. That we attribute emotional content to them results from a misunderstanding of how the mind operates in relation to perceptual data. When we say that such and such a painting or sculpture is full of meaning, what we are saying is that the elements perceived in the work, (i.e., the way the paint is distributed on the canvas, the form given to the marble or bronze), are associated with ideas in our minds in such a fashion that we feel that the work has meaning. If a meaning were inherent in a work of art, then it can be presumed that this meaning would be identically apparent to all who looked at it, given a common level of understanding among the viewers. Yet we know from experience that such is not usually the case. The same applies for all other human qualities attributed to works of art. To quote once more from Berleant's book, The Aesthetic Field:

"Clearly, to speak of an object as being expressive or as expressing something is to interpret it animistically. The object is neither expressive nor is it expressing anything; it is we who regard it as having significance. The object itself simply is." 8

To take meaning out of art would seem to render it no more important than rocks or trees, perhaps, but

of course this is not the case. What it does for art is to place it in its proper context, as a product of man's creative "genius", according to Kant,<sup>9</sup> given to man to enhance and enrich his contemplative life. For Aesthetic Education, it allows for more meaningful learning through the development of perceptual awareness. Awareness implies here a form of heightened or intensified perception coupled with accumulated experience. Dewey defines it as "...predictive expectancy, wariness."<sup>10</sup> In Behavioral Psychology much use is made of conditioning to affect perception, to heighten perception, and it would seem that, no matter how cautiously one may approach this matter, some form of conditioning takes place whenever one attempts to modify another's behavior. However, it is to be hoped that encouraging a student to develop his own perceptual faculties will not be understood as wholesale consumption of behaviorist methodologies. David Ecker, in an interpretation of Carl Roger's objection to Behaviorism, says that phenomenological inquiry can investigate many issues which are meaningless for the behaviorist, (i.e., purposes, goals, values, choice, personal constructs, accepted or rejected responsibility, etc.).<sup>11</sup>

In a study conducted by Child and Schwartz in 1967, an attempt was made to determine whether exposing children to works of art without guidance would affect their ability to make aesthetic judgements, using expert opinion as a comparison. It was found, by pre-test and post-test evaluation, after exposure to great numbers of pairs of slides of better and poorer art, that their discriminatory capabilities had not increased in any degree, and in some cases had even diminished.<sup>12</sup> This would tend to indicate that aesthetic awareness is something which has to be developed through training. We have only to look around us at our homes, our stores, our communities and our country to realize that aesthetic awareness is not an active ingredient in much of our daily living. Yet, according to Francis T. Villemain, we cannot altogether blame this, as we are wont to do, on mass production. He claims that volume alone does not preclude taste or



aesthetic considerations so much as does a lack of order and relatedness.<sup>13</sup> Eugene F. Kaelin, in a more art oriented context, says somewhat the same thing. "Training to the experience of quality and the process of applying an aesthetic criterion to the problems of its judgement would make of institutionalized art a necessary condition for the goodness of life."<sup>14</sup> In an article by Donald W. Crawford can be found the direct application of the above ideas to aesthetic education when he says:

"Aesthetic education, then, intrinsically involves the attempt to cultivate an awareness of artistic expression, an awareness directed not merely toward traditional modes of artistic expression, the recognized categories of art, but also toward artistically expressive elements in what are generally considered the more mundane activities of human life and the products of human creation and skill not ordinarily considered artistic."<sup>15</sup>

That there are strong implications for education in all the foregoing remarks can be readily discerned. However, the application of theory to practice is still subject to much debate. Views of Aesthetic Education range all the way from the rather limited objective of expanding students' awareness and appreciation of art objects, to that of seeing in it the ultimate solution to most of society's ills. That there is merit in both points of view is undeniable, but since Education has so much to do with shaping the attitudes and intellectual patterns of youth there is a strong inclination to attempt to work toward the latter objective.

It is becoming increasingly clear that many of the problems both general and personal which beset society today are due in large measure to the lack of awareness demonstrated at all levels in the decision-making process. For a great many years Western society

has been caught in the maelstrom of the industrial age, which has swept us along at such dizzying speed that very little time for reflection and contemplation has been available. Expediency has long been the modus operandi for decision-making. Today, technological advances have so greatly increased the pace that we are experiencing in society a kind of spin-off effect. Those closest to the vortex are being pulled inexorably inward, while those at the periphery are being thrust away into quieter water. It may be that the time is propitious for the application of educational theories which reflect a concern for the "goodness of life" rather than continuing to place emphasis on the "good life", which still very much influences most of our thinking and decision-making.

"Goodness of life" is to "the good life" as the ocean is to the raindrop. The one is vast, permanent in change, powerful, unified and to some extent self-purifying; the other is miniscule, unstable, weak, fragmentary and usually contaminated. Yet the raindrop is conceived in the ocean, and must inevitably return to its source. The implication here intended is not that one need entirely forego the pleasures of daily living, but that one's individual existence should be considered in relation to the greater collectivity. The basis for this point of view lies both within the domain of Aesthetic Education as understood from the readings, and parallel to the phenomenological approach to Aesthetic proper.

On the one hand, there appears to be a general consensus that having students consider works of art and discuss their aesthetic qualities, with guidance, can lead to enhanced perception, i.e., awareness. Once the student is in possession of this perceptual, critical and judgemental faculty it is presumed that he would be able to extend its application into other areas of study. Though relatively less emphasis has been placed on the creation of art work by students, presumably because it is more difficult in student work to localize for discussion those aesthetic qualities so readily discernable in the works of great artists, none-the-less the opportunity

for pertinent aesthetic discussion at the student's own level of development should not be underestimated. The immediacy of such experience, based, as it is, on the student's personal attempts to give form and substance to his ideas, can be a positive learning process within the bounds of aesthetic investigation.

The second aspect of Aesthetic Education, seen as a parallel to phenomenological Aesthetics, is taken from a more personal viewpoint. It is by no means as clearly defined as the first, nor is it closely bound within the confines of the creative arts. This approach depends for its effectiveness on a more philosophical type of awareness exactly paralleling the investigative techniques applied in phenomenological Aesthetics, whereby one considers the relationship of the parts to each other, to the whole, and to the viewer or experiencer at a particular point in time, of any given object placed before the viewer for perception. That this object be a sonata, a painting or a chemical experiment is of little import. What should be given consideration is the relatedness of the part to the whole and how it is in turn related to the viewer, and as was indicated earlier by the experiment concerning the showing of art slides without guided discussion, the onus for providing this type of learning experience for students rests entirely with their mentors. If anything is to be gleaned from the writings of John Dewey, already so thoroughly harvested, it appears that one must search carefully between the rows to find those kernels which promise such rich returns for our efforts.

No single aspect of life is remote from and unaffected by any and all other aspects, and as the raindrop eventually returns to pollute the ocean, so too does our individual action affect not only ourselves, but the whole of existence. If people are to be brought to an awareness of this totality, then it appears that some sort of methodology must be found whereby teachers in all the disciplines may be brought to the same level of awareness first, so that through Education the concept of the "goodness of life" could be nurtured. Much further investigation into the philosophy of aesthetics, humanistic psychology and current educational methodology will have to be undertaken before even a tentative structure



could be devised which would serve to link phenomenological aesthetics with teacher training, but the possibilities which appear to lie in this approach to Education would seem to indicate that such a course could prove beneficial.

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6. Ibid. p. 6
7. Ibid. Ch. 2 It should be noted that my recourse to Berleant's book resulted from a desire to learn more of his ideas after reading his article in the Journal which came closest of any to my own ideas.
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"Experience and Nature" (New York, Dover, 1958)
11. Ibid. Refer to article in No. 9
12. Ibid. Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan. 1968  
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Proper"
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## LES ARTS PLASTIQUES ET LA COMMUNICATION

WIM HYSECOM

There is a course now available in the Province of Quebec called "Arts Plastiques" Mass Media.

This course has for the moment a great development, but with different objectives.

In some schools it will be a communications course while in others it will be an art course.

In this paper we try to determine what is art, the role of art in this specific course and the relationship between art and communication.

### INTRODUCTION

Il y a depuis quelques années dans les programmes d'art de la Province de Québec un cours qui s'intitule: Arts plastiques "communication". On y enseigne comme moyens d'expression des techniques telles que la photographie, le cinéma et la télévision. C'est en 1966-78 que ce cours a été institué lorsque la Commission scolaire des Mille-Iles tentait une expérience en inscrivant la cinématographie à son programme. Cette expérience a permis de structurer un cours dont la conception actuelle est décrite dans le programme-cadre des Arts plastiques et qui inclut les techniques suivantes: impression, maquette, photographie, cinématographie et télévision.

Nous constatons aujourd'hui que l'implantation progressive de ce cours dans différentes écoles et



commissions scolaires de la Province a amené le développement d'objectifs très variés. Le titre Art et communication est ambigu; certains l'interprètent comme un cours d'art et d'autres comme un cours de communication. Nous tenterons dans cet article de placer ce cours dans le contexte d'un programme d'arts plastiques et d'en dégager une signification sur le plan de la communication.

### QU'EST CE QUE L'ART?

La question est posée dans l'optique de problème particulier qui nous intéresse et c'est dans cette optique que nous tenterons de définir ce qu'est l'art. Dans la philosophie de l'art (1938), R.G. Collingwood reconnaît en art trois types d'activités:

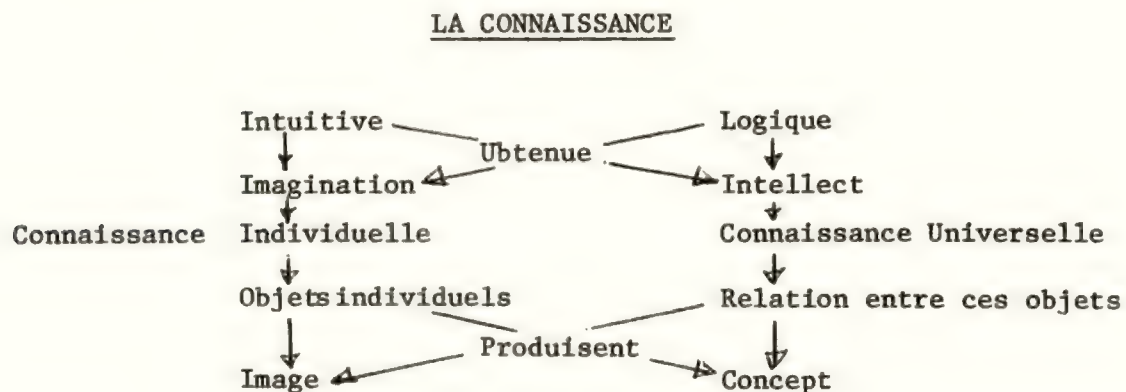
- a) la création d'objets d'art ou poursuite d'activités en vue d'une production d'oeuvres d'art;
- b) la création d'objets d'art ou poursuite d'activités artificielles par opposition à activités naturelles;
- c) la démarche que nous appelons artistique et dans laquelle l'esprit tend vers une connaissance intuitive de la beauté.

Ces activités ont des sources très profondes. Comme le souligne Theodosius Dobzhansky, l'art s'est manifesté très tôt au cours de l'évolution de l'homme. La théorie du caractère premier de l'art prend un sens plus précis depuis que nous connaissons mieux le développement mental des enfants et celui des peuples primitifs écrit R.G. Collingwood. L'art commence avec les premiers gestes de l'homme; l'homme affronte la matière, il pose des gestes au moyen desquel il exprime ses sensations et ses sentiments. Pour l'enfant comme pour le primitif, l'art est explication et connaissance du monde.

La connaissance, écrit Benedetto Croce dans La théorie

de l'esthétique (1901) a deux formes: l'une est intuitive et l'autre est logique. La connaissance intuitive est obtenue par l'imagination et se produit dans des images; la connaissance logique passe par l'intellect pour arriver à des concepts.

Le graphique qui suit veut illustrer ces deux formes de la connaissance.



Imaginer est une démarche vers la connaissance et c'est une activité de l'esprit. C'est cette activité d'imaginer qui fait de l'art l'activité première et fondamentale de la pensée.

Selon R.G. Collingwood, chaque champ d'activité comprend trois éléments. Il y a d'abord un élément théorique au moyen duquel l'esprit arrive à une connaissance de quelque chose. Il y a ensuite un élément pratique au moyen duquel l'esprit apporte un changement en lui-même et dans son environnement. Enfin, il y a un élément émotif par lequel l'esprit reçoit les influences de pôles opposés (plaisir-tristesse).

#### L'ART EST UN LANGAGE

Comme l'écrit André Leroi-Gourhan dans le geste et la parole, dès les origines de l'homme, l'art est

indissociable du langage et de la technique. Parce qu'il est langage et technique, l'art se distingue de la communication du geste émotif et de la communication verbale logique; l'art est communication imaginaire. L'art a une dimension symbolique qui permet d'exprimer l'inexprimable. L'art est une activité qui comprend les trois éléments, théorique, pratique et émotionnel que Collingwood applique comme suit: l'élément théorique est celui par lequel l'esprit poursuit en but de contemplation et une recherche de la beauté; l'élément pratique est celui qui permet à l'esprit de réaliser un idéal; l'élément émotionnel est celui qui est manifesté par la présence d'émotions opposées.

La nature est belle et des objets sont beaux pour celui qui les regarde avec imagination écrit Benedetto Croce. Celui qui est sans imagination, qu'il soit zoologiste ou botaniste, ne pourra jamais reconnaître la beauté qui existe dans les animaux et dans les fleurs. La nature est belle quand elle est saisie par l'imagination et il en est de même pour les objets d'art (objets qui ont leur finalité propre). Comme l'écrit R.G. Collingwood, imaginer c'est être un artiste, bien imaginer c'est être un bon artiste et très bien imaginer c'est être un grand artiste et il ajoute: être un artiste c'est créer en soi un monde d'images dont la fonction est d'exprimer et d'élever l'esprit.

#### L'ART EST UN MOYEN DE COMMUNICATION

La connaissance du monde commence avec la connaissance de soi-même et le rôle de l'art, comme l'écrit René Huyghe dans L'Art et l'âme (1960) est d'être depuis toujours un monde d'expression de l'art et de l'âme, de l'art langage de l'âme.

L'art a permis à l'homme primitif de saisir la forme des choses avant de les analyser et, par là, d'en acquérir une connaissance vitale et suffisante. En exprimant les sensations issues de ces formes, l'homme primitif communiquait aussi ses propres idées.



L'art du Moyen-Âge aussi était le véhicule d'un message, d'une idée, d'une croyance, d'une religion.

Nous avons dit que l'art est technique et langage et parce qu'il est langage nous pouvons y greffer l'acte de communiquer. Nous pouvons prolonger l'art dans la communication ou enraciner la communication dans l'art. Tout langage, et celui de l'art compris, peut permettre de formuler un message. Toutefois un langage est plus qu'un simple vocabulaire ou qu'une austère grammaire et un message aussi est plus qu'un simple alignement ou qu'une combinaison savante de sons et d'images. On ne saurait utiliser un langage pour communiquer sans connaître d'abord les ressources de ce langage. Utiliser un langage artistique pour communiquer, c'est communiquer au moyen des ressources d'expression de l'art. C'est communiquer par la sensibilité et cela implique nécessairement une sensibilité active et activée.

L'art n'est pas la décoration d'un objet quelconque, une beauté qui camoufle la laideur et l'art n'est pas non plus un vernis pour la communication, un bel emballage pour mieux faire passer un message. Les structures de l'art, le caractère premier de l'art nous engagent nécessairement dans une direction qui va de l'art à la communication et non de la communication à l'art. Cela veut dire dans l'ordre pratique qu'il faut distinguer un premier temps et un second temps, un premier temps qui est l'apprentissage des ressources d'expression de l'art et un second temps qui est l'identification des messages communicables par le langage artistique.

#### L'ART ET LA COMMUNICATION VISUELLE

Il y a plusieurs catégories de communication. Nous en distinguerons deux: la communication comme moyen d'expression et la communication comme moyen d'information. Nous incluons d'abord dans la communication comme moyen d'expression les formes d'art traditionnelles, c'est-à-dire les techniques artistiques liées à un langage artistique. Une peinture de Rembrandt est pour nous une communication comme moyen d'expression.

Cette peinture exprime une connaissance de l'homme. Ce langage de l'inexprimable est un acte de communication. Saisir cette communication, c'est vivre une expérience esthétique.

Nous incluons aussi dans la communication comme moyen d'expression un film de Fellini ou une photographie de Karsh parce que Fellini et Karsh sont des artistes. Il faut cependant faire ici une distinction. Les techniques que ces artistes utilisent ne sont pas des techniques artistiques pas plus d'ailleurs que ne le sont, dans un autre ordre d'idées, la soudure oxy-acétylénique ou la fonte. Les techniques du cinématographie et de la photographie sont des techniques de communication associées à un langage artistique comme la soudure et la fonte sont des techniques scientifiques associées à un langage artistique. Les techniques de la cinématographie et de la photographie servent plus particulièrement la communication comme moyen d'information. Elles servent à transmettre un message. Le message est formulé dans un langage artistique, en termes de sons et d'images pour être saisi par les sens parce qu'il est ce message particulier qui ne peut être compris sans la participation active de la sensibilité.

#### L'EXPRESSION PRECEDE LA COMMUNICATION

Nous pouvons nous poser la question de l'importance de cette approche de l'expression artistique en éducation. Benedetto Croce écrit "la connaissance intuitive est connaissance expressive" comme l'imagination est la démarche vers la connaissance intuitive qui produit l'image, nous pouvons dire que l'art est l'expression des impressions sensibles.

Les sens en contact avec notre environnement stimulent l'imagination et c'est l'imagination qui active l'expression créatrice. La somme de nos expériences émotives et sensibles nous permet de communiquer au moyen du langage artistique et l'individu qui possède le langage pourra regarder imaginativement et vivre des expériences esthétiques.

Suivant Benedetto Croce, le processus de l'expression artistique passe nécessairement par quatre phases:

- premièrement, nous avons des impressions qui amènent en
- deuxième lieu l'expression de la synthèse esthétique. Cette synthèse esthétique nous procure dans une
- troisième phase, un plaisir esthétique, dans le
- quatrième étape nous traduisons ces plaisirs esthétiques dans des phénomènes physiques (sons, tons, mouvements, organisations des lignes et des couleurs, etc.)

#### ART ET EDUCATION

Les expériences créatrices auront la même démarche que l'enseignement de la littérature en éducation que R.G. Collingwood décrit comme suit: "l'éducation de la littérature doit procéder par l'enseignement de la poésie et donner naissance à la connaissance de la prose. Sa finalité est de permettre au jeune d'exprimer ses sentiments clairs et précis, et de lui permettre de comprendre ceux des autres. L'étudiant ne doit pas être jugé pour ses connaissances livresques mais pour ses propres créations littéraires ses conversations, son habilité d'écrire et de lire des lettres, d'écouter intelligiblement. Tout ça c'est la prose de la littérature.

Nous vivons actuellement dans un monde où l'information visuelle est omniprésente. L'homme d'aujourd'hui est soumis à une agression presque ininterrompue d'images, il est donc d'une importance capitale que l'école prépare l'homme à affronter cet information visuelle. L'humanité a évolué du stade de la communication typographique au stade de la communication visuelle. Nous ne pouvons arriver à une compréhension d'une activité sans une expérience authentique à cette activité.



## LE COURS "ART ET COMMUNICATION"

En étudiant les techniques que le cours "Art et Communication" comporte, nous constatons que toutes ces techniques, sauf la maquette qui est complémentaire des autres, ont une possibilité et même une fonction de reproduction. Ces moyens visuels d'information et de communication avec lesquels l'homme contemporain est en contact constant influencent sa vie.

L'affiche qui nous incite à acheter tel produit, d'aller voir tel spectacle ou de voter pour tel candidat n'a pas pour fonction de nous faire vivre une expérience esthétique mais, par sa création d'équilibre des formes et des couleurs, elle peut activer notre sensibilité, notre imagination, nous inciter à poser un geste, provoquer en nous un plaisir esthétique.

Le travail de l'artiste, qui a exécuté cette affiche, comporte les activités de création artistique et expressive tel que nous avons mentionné précédemment, la seule différence avec l'expression artistique traditionnelle réside dans sa finalité, cette finalité a influencé au départ la démarche de l'artiste et la fonction de communiquer a été à la base de la démarche expressive.

Ce que nous venons de dire pour l'affiche est aussi vrai pour le langage cinématographique et télévisuel, dans ce sens que le travail de conception implique au départ un message ou une idée à transmettre, mais ces langages comportent par la suite toutes les démarches et toutes les différentes phases que nous avons citées pour l'expression artistique et procurent chez l'individu qui peut saisir et comprendre ce langage visuel un plaisir esthétique.

La fonction de l'école est d'établir un rapprochement avec la vie, de permettre à l'homme de vivre en harmonie avec son milieu de lui permettre de le comprendre le mieux possible. Or pour comprendre une activité quelconque, il est nécessaire d'avoir des

expériences relatives à cette activité. Les activités visuelles comprises dans ce cours sont des activités artistiques avec une finalité de communication.

Des démarches expressives des élèves en arts plastiques durant toutes les années passés à l'école leur ont permis de voir imaginativement, de découvrir leur pensée par l'imagination. Le cours "Art et Communication" doit maintenant leur donner la possibilité de structurer techniquement le langage visuel afin qu'ils puissent transmettre leurs idées à leurs semblables et ensuite découvrir les idées des autres. Cette démarche expressive qu'ils ont fait antérieurement leur permettra maintenant de communiquer. Cette communication les ouvrira à une plus grande compréhension de leur milieu.

Communiquer par l'expression artistique, c'est dire que l'approche pédagogique dans ce cours est une démarche d'expression artistique avec une finalité de communication. C'est à travers les démarches expressives et créatives de l'élève qu'il comprendra plus tard toute la communication visuelle. L'agression de l'image se transformera dès lors dans une compréhension et une appréciation de cette image, cette image qui lui permettra de vivre des expériences esthétiques.

ON CONCEPTUAL ART

SOPHIE LANDAU

L'art conceptuel trouve ses origines dans le mouvement DADA et l'art minime. Desorme c'est un art qui manque la grâce et le charme de l'humeur. C'est un art qui demande un rapprochement intellectuel remplaçant les objets d'art par des concepts. La langue devient le mode de communication plutôt que la vision et ceci rend le mouvement hors de la périphérie de l'art.

La faiblesse de l'art conceptuel est celle de communication et de l'exécution d'oeuvres. C'est une nouvelle forme d'expression qui doit trouver son milieu si elle est à devenir une forme d'expression valide plutôt qu'une curiosité des esprits artistiques foudroyers.



The following quotation will help to illustrate the method in which art has been presented to the general public today.

"THE BEST WAY TO DO ART"

A young artist in art school used to worship the paintings of Cezanne. He looked at and studied all the books he could find on Cezanne and copied all of the reproductions of Cezanne's work he found in the books.

He visited a museum and for the first time saw a real Cezanne painting. He hated it. It was nothing like the Cezannes he had studied in the books. From that time on, he made all of his paintings the sizes of paintings reproduced in books and he painted them in black and white. He also painted captions and explanations on the paintings as in books. Often he just used the words.

And one day he realized that very few people went to art galleries and museums but many people looked at books and magazines as he did and they got them through the mail as he did.

Moral: It's difficult to put a painting in a mailbox.<sub>1</sub>

It is strange to note that many books dealing with art tend to be verbal, and most reproductions included in art books are usually in black and white. Thus, most works of art, that are considered to be of any significance are spoken about, described, analyzed,

criticized, explained, and labeled - but not necessarily seen. Once they have been properly categorized, everyone feels more comfortable looking at them. They are no longer a foreign threat to the viewer, for now one has mounds of data to take refuge in. If the work of art begins to demand too much of one's attention, there is always another article to read and another book that has a "fresh" and "original" point of view. But in the final analysis, a work of art remains a work of art, (bound to a visual image), and words remain words, bound to the conventions of language. Just as one cannot describe a Beethoven sonata in words, one cannot make a painting verbal.

Very often, in our age of instant information, we "hear about" an object before we even get to see it. Sometimes we never get to see it, for by the time an object can be brought around to all remote parts of the world to be viewed, it has lost its' popularity and originality. Therefore only the idea of the object remains, and we have a visual and mental concept of the object which is not always supplemented by its' material counterpart. This story will illustrate my point:

#### "THE NEON STORY"

Once there was an unknown sculptor who was an early worker in neon. The director of a small college gallery who heard him speak of his efforts with this material asked to see his work. Upon seeing the neon sculpture, the director arranged to show the piece in the gallery.

Press announcements were mailed out. On the basis of the announcements, the following occurred:

1. One of America's largest

newspapers asked for coloured photographs to run in the Sunday edition.

2. One of America's largest museums wanted to give a new talent award to the sculptor.
3. The director of a major gallery in one of America's largest cities offered him a one man show.

No one had seen any of the artist's work but all had read the press announcement.

Moral: Never underestimate the value of an idea.<sup>2</sup>

Since contemporary art has been gradually moving away from a figurative subject matter, it has been dealing more and more with the elements and mechanics of the plastic language, as exemplified in Op Art. The hard edge artist was more concerned with geometric form and colour, than an organic rendition of a material object. This preoccupation with the basic elements of the plastic language has caused the artist to eliminate more and more detail from his work until it is left with the barest essentials. Often, he uses pure colour on a canvas, as exemplified in Minimal art. Very often, in order to view Minimal art intelligently, the viewer has to have certain knowledge of the artist's intentions, his ideas, and his philosophy. Thus the viewing of Minimal art does not rest purely on the visual or the perceptual level, but also on an intellectual and a cognitive level.

It is obvious from the direction art has taken, that the concept or the idea of a given work of art is just as important as the material rendition of the concept. Very often, the material rendition of the object is secondary to the idea, or simply illustrates the idea. For example, the work of Elsworth Kelly, depicting canvases, each painted a different colour, do create a visual sensation, but they need to be supplemented by the "why" (philosophy) - thus justifying or explaining a particular rendition.



As the material execution of the work is so simplistic, and once the "why" is explained, anyone can reproduce or produce the object or a variety of objects that would satisfy the particular requirements of the philosophy. Thus a concept has many possibilities of rendition and an object has many possible explanations, (as long as art critics and art philosophers are around). In the case where the artist defines the "why" as well as the "what" the critic has very little say, for the definition of the work becomes an intrinsic part of the work.

If we examine Conceptual Art, we will discover that its' roots can be traced as far back as the Dada movement. The fact is that the Dadaist movement drastically changed people's outlook on art. Since then, the acceptable subject matter, as well as the means of expression has been altered. The subject matter was no longer restricted, since a new door was opened up by them, which admitted the absurd, common, and ridiculous, anything has been permissible. A fur-lined cup was as acceptable as a urinal or a painting. Thus the boundaries of art were no longer restricted.

In 1961, Piero Manzoni challenged the conventions of art by putting his excrement in sealed containers and labelling it "Artist's Shit", specifying that it had no preservatives and then exhibiting it and selling it. Another project that Manzoni did was a balloon he inflated, calling it "Artist's Breath". Since the balloon was of cheap quality, it eventually deflated, thus, perishable art came into being. The fact that his art was perishable is very important, since the art object or product was not permanent, thus the artist creates a dispensable art object. The same occurs with his canned shit as it contains no preservatives, we assume that it will perish.<sup>3</sup> Because the object, in one case air, and in the other case, shit, are very common, it seems ridiculous that anybody would want them as a commodity to be bought and sold. They lack permanence as well as uniqueness.

By being confronted by an art object so common we question the criteria and validity of all art objects. This of course started with Duchamps when he introduced ready-made objects into his show.

Conceptual artists carried this idea a step further. They eliminated the art object completely and replaced it with an idea or an act. Thus their art takes place either in our minds or in time. In either case it cannot be bought or sold, since ideas are not concrete commodities and time cannot be recaptured. As Conceptual art tries to do away with the art product,<sup>4</sup> and as it becomes minimal and theoretical, the concept becomes as important as the product. Another reason for doing away with the art product was that art was becoming very commercial and the product became a commercial commodity. The value of the art object was often dictated by the stock market or the latest issue of "Time" magazine. Artists like Michael Heizer or Robert Smithson, produced earth works, and in this way avoided the problem, by making either the land or soil the art object and since it took place in time, it cannot be repeated thus, becoming a non-commodity.

In the case of Conceptual Art, where the mode of communication is either auditory, visual, or linguistic, the question of language as art arises. Terry Atkinson raises the question whether the essay which he was writing about art is indeed art.<sup>5</sup> But then any writing on art becomes a candidate for art, and art critics are essentially conceptual artists although their intentions differ. Terry Smith, in his article on "Art and Art and Language", states that there is a clear separation between Art and Language and the uses of language in Conceptual Art, because their aims and methodologies differ. He claims that Conceptual as well as post-Minimal artists "subsist under one or other, or some combination of, these formalist, romantic, or materialist theory-sets..." while Art language is free of that.<sup>6</sup>

In doing research on Conceptual Art, the more I read about it, the less I began to regard it in terms of visual art, and more in terms of literature, music, drama or mathematics. Whereas up to now, I have regarded the tools of plastic arts to be visual, Conceptual artists have used the tools or media of literature, music, or drama as their means of expression. Therefore their "message" had to be expressed with the tools and conventions of another discipline. For example, if an artist wishes to express a concept and uses language as a means of communication, he has to sue the conventions of grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, in order to communicate his ideas. Thus the quality of his message depends not only on the idea and content expressed, but also on his ability to express himself in words. It is true that history books use language to express history, and art books to express art, but the style of writing contributes a great deal to the idea expressed, even though the idea is the slave of the style.

Language has many purposes. With it one can express the loftiest of ideas or the most banal thought. But in the case of Conceptual Art, where the artist uses language to express art, one must question whether paraphrasing the idea, or editing it, will make a difference to the work of art. In other words, is the idea of prime importance, or the means of expressing that idea, or both? In answering these questions we must ask how language is used in Conceptual Art and what role it plays in communication of ideas. If the language used is a part of the art form, then Conceptual Art enters the realm of literature and has to be viewed from a literary point of view. If, on the other hand, the idea is of prime importance then, it would be viewed from a philosophical point of view. If, both the idea and the medium are of prime importance, then it would be an integrated art form, as the means and the content are of equal importance.

Examining many of the Conceptual Art projects I



doubt whether many artists in documenting their ideas use the language as an art form. For example, in the work of Roger Cutforth, Rosemary Castoro, or Vito Acconci, a documentary style is used. Their activities and events are merely noted down in a stark and impersonal style. Other artists like Terry Atkinson, Ian Wilson, or Joseph Kosuth, are more conscious of their use of language, and at times it becomes an integral part of their conceptual work. In cases where the use of language dominates the artist's intention we have literature. The possibility of looking at conceptual art, in its' literary form, from a visual point of view, is quite absurd. Not only is it not the intention of the artist to produce a visual object but we are imposing a set of values used for visual expression onto another medium. It is like smelling music or tasting a piece of literature.

The reason that Conceptual artists reject the visual mode of expression is that they feel that we are bound to our perceptions, as well as to a formal aesthetic criteria, to break out of that we are not given a material object to cling to, thus freeing our perceptions.

Sol Lewitt claims that: "1) Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach." 7

That statement in part stems from Plato's idea on art. He states that art is an illusion upon an illusion, since the world we live in is a mere image of a perfect world and any art is merely an imperfect imitation of an imitation. By dispensing with the art object and replacing it with an idea, supposedly we are getting closer to the world of reality. Therefore by dispensing with the object and being presented with an idea, we are omitting the stage of illusion.

But to say that Conceptual artists are mystics is false. For one thing mysticism manifests itself in an experience or an object. The experiences of Buddha or St. Ignatius Loyola manifest themselves in their writings and philosophy.<sup>8</sup> The mysticism of Rembrandt, Blake, or Beethoven<sup>8</sup> was manifested in their work. But to assume that all ideas are mystical, or at least the ones presented in Conceptual Art is false. I cannot see anything mystical about somebody climbing up and down a stool for thirty odd minutes, each day, or somebody measuring The Empire State Building.<sup>9</sup> If these acts had manifested themselves in a mystical experience, or if they had been performed in order to reach a mystical experience, it would have been stated by the artist.

In his sentences on Conceptual Art, 1968, Sol Lewitt states that "Banal ideas cannot be rescued by beautiful execution."<sup>10</sup> I feel that the converse is just as true, beautiful ideas cannot stand a banal execution, both the idea and the execution are interdependent. The concept has to be communicated, whether it be through writing, an act, or through visual symbols, the mode of expression is just as important as the concept to be communicated. In cases when the act is banal, but the idea glorious or beautiful, it hardly stands a chance. Conceptual Art, like any new art form, is open to a wide range of projects, yet lacking refinement and discrimination. Many projects that are passed down as Conceptual Art are banal, unimaginative, and simply ordinary and uncreative. They may be Conceptual Art, but their quality and standard has not yet been determined.

To define Conceptual Art, like defining anything else, would be to limit it to the definition, and to exclude a range of possibilities that the definition does not encompass. Not to define it would be to speak in a vague void, therefore including many things that Conceptual Art is not. To solve this problem I

shall deal with Conceptual Art through concepts. I feel that in order to express myself on this subject, I have to use the subject, otherwise I would be translating one mode of expression into another.

Analizing Conceptual Art I came to the conclusion that there are many things that either stemmed from concepts. or their basis lie in concepts. For example, money, cheques, maps, and words, (unless their symbolic counterpart is presented) are conceptual.

The following are several examples of "ready-made" concepts. Whether they are Conceptual Art or not, I will not answer, but I certainly think that they have great potential in Conceptual Art.

Sol Lewitt stated that,

"All ideas are art if they are concerned with art and fall within the conventions of art."<sup>11</sup>



This statement brought to mind an advertisement that I received. In some cases one picture is worth a thousand words, but in this case, one word suggests a thousand pictures. "Wild Horses", suggests a wide range of paintings, ranging from Delacroix and Gericault, or these sold at Woolworth's. What monstrosities, or masterpieces they referred to I'll never know.



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This example of "Conceptual Art", was taken from the MONTREAL SCENE, T.V. listings.

"I Married a Monster from Outer Space" (1958):  
A young bride discovers her husband is not her former fiance, but a monster from a distant galaxy who intends to conquer the earth. Starring Tom Tryon, Gloria Talbott, Maxie Rosenbloom. (1 hr. 35 min.) 12

This description of a movie was just as suggestive as the advertisement. The writers were able to reduce one hour and thirty-five minutes of viewing into one sentence. Not only that, they left the reader a wide range of possibilities in interpretation. Until it is acted out by the actors, interpreted by the director and the stage designer, it remains in its conceptual state.

Music falls within the same context as a play, since the performance of the artist, the orchestra, as well as the quality and the interpretation of a conductor, will make a certain piece of music a memorable performance or a disaster. The quality of a performance depends both on the composition and the rendition.

A computer program is a concept until it is run on the machine, and the concept executed. Until then it remains a symbol in a coded language. In mathematics the square root of minus one, has no physical representation, it does not even have a symbolic evaluation. It is a conceptual entity. Originally it was called imaginary, and attempts in modern mathematics have been made to rationalize it, the result is that its existence is accepted, but not understood. Mathematicians prefer to call it a "complex" number, as if it gave that entity some physical measure. It can be argued that all numbers are symbolic, and that may be so, but at least some of them can be applied to concrete objects, for example apples, miles, etc.

-1-

## SLIST

```

90 PRINT CHR$(10);"FOR INSTRUCTIONS LIST LNPRLIB***:LISTINS";CHR$(10)
100 PRINT CHR$(10);CHR$(10);CHR$(10)
200 MARGIN 72
300 LET K$=""
400 FOR I=1 TO 7
500 LET K$=K$&".....!"
600 NEXT I
700 LET K$=K$&".."
800 IF END #1 THEN 1400
900 LINPUT #1:AS
1000 PRINT K$
1100 PRINT AS
1200 PRINT
1300 GO TO 800
1400 END

```

-1-

## LISTINS

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100 THE PROGRAM LNPRLIB***:LIST WAS WRITTEN BY LANPAR LTD,MONTREAL
110 TO ALLOW A USER TO GAUGE TELETYPE OUTPUT MORE ACCURATELY.
120
130 LNPRLIB***:LIST READS A FILE AND OUTPUTS IT ON A LINE BY LINE
140 BASIS . EACH LINE IS PRECEDED BY THE OUTPUT OF '.....!'
150 ACROSS A 72 CHARACTER OUTPUT LINE. THE<:> INDICATES 5
160 AND THE <I> INDICATES 10 CHARACTER POSITIONS.
170
180 THE MARGIN OF THE OUTPUT TO TERMINAL IS ARBITRARILY SET AT
190 72 CHARACTERS.
200
210
220 USING LNPRLIB***:LIST
230 =====
240
250 TO USE LNPRLIB***:LIST USE THE FOLLOWING SET OF COMMANDS
260
270 OLD FILENAME (WHERE FILENAME IS THE FILE WHOSE FORMAT IS TO BE SEEN)
280 EXE LNPRLIB***:LIST
290
300

```



Menus and recipes are also conceptual, since very often by reading them we can imagine what they stand for. The following recipe is conceptual in more ways than one, it is an "imaginary" recipe, since it has no physical counterpart.

#### PEANUT BUTTER STUFFED CAVIAR

2000 medium caviar eggs  
 2 tablespoons butter  
 1 onion, grated  
 1 cup peanut butter  
 1 teaspoon sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon pepper  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon marjoram  
 2 egg yolks  
 1 tablespoon parsley, minced

Cut a slice off each caviar. Empty each egg and pass the content through a sieve.

Melt the butter, add onion, peanut butter, the caviar pulp, sugar, marjoram, salt and pepper to taste. Cook together a few minutes, stirring most of the time. Remove from heat and add the egg yolks and parsley.

Stuff each caviar egg with the mixture. Place in a baking dish.

Bake 30-40 minutes in a 400F. oven.

Serve hot or cold. Serves two.

#### Conclusion:

A lot of criticism has been made of Conceptual Art.

"Let me stick my neck out and say that I define art as something one looks at. If you

conclude, as some do not, that art is not necessarily something to be looked at, then by the same logic couldn't we say that literature is something that one smells." <sup>13</sup>

The reason for this is, as stated above, that until now we have regarded art on the visual, or visual and tactile level.

"...philosophy defines art as a means of conceiving the world visually. There are alternative methods of conceiving the world. We can measure the world and record our measurements in an agreed system of signs (numerals or letters); we can make statements about the world based on experiment."

Herbert Read goes on to say that:

"... the artist is simply the man who has the ability and the desire to transform the visual perception into a material form". <sup>14</sup>

Later on, he divides visual transformation into perception and expression. According to Herbert Read artistic expression is based on perception taken from visual and material sources.

Conceptual Art, of course, dispenses with the art object, therefore we cannot relate to it on a visual level. If one does, it is against the intention of the artist. Until now art has been looked at, meaning that it had to have an object. But if an idea becomes art, then there is the problem of exhibiting it and communicating the idea. Conceptual artists have used words, photographs, acts, or events in order to communicate their ideas. In cases where events were used, they have been documented by the artist, (otherwise we wouldn't have heard of them), and the documentation became a part of the art project. The problem

with this is that the documentation of an act, and the act, are two different things. Ideally the act should exist on its own, in its time, since talking or describing an act is analagous to talking or writing about a painting, it is a secondary process to that of creation.

The problem of communication is one of the difficulties of Conceptual Art. It is very often that the artist communicates through art galleries, or art books, the very conventions that he rejects. Often it is done visually, again using formal conventions of the arts. It has been suggested that the only valid way for Conceptual artists to communicate would be through telephathy, since it would completely dispence with any material object.

Another weakness of Conceptual Art is that it takes itself too seriously. Often its intellectualism lacks humour and intelligence. Whereas the Dada movement had wit and originality, a great deal of Conceptual Art tends to be dull and banal.

Whereas the Dada movement had wit and originality, a great deal of Conceptual Art does not. It is pointless. Even though the project may fulfill the specifications of the artist, it is dead-end, it does not make a statement about anything. For example, when Duchamp put a shovel into an exhibition, he made a very pointed statement about art. He opened up the whole question of the art product, of the function of a museum, as well as what is art. Conceptual Art, on the other hand, seldom makes a statement about anything.

Visual arts make a visual statement, while Conceptual Art should make some sort of a statement in its realm, otherwise it fails to communicate. The fact that the artist chooses to make his project public, either through writing or exhibition(ism), it opens the product to criticism. The artist implies that there is something he wants to communicate, or



to state. But to carry out an act and leave it hanging in the air is pointless.

As far as the nature of Conceptual Art projects is concerned, many of them are outside the realm of art, and deal with other disciplines. These range from literature and science, to psychology and music. Unfortunately, not too many artists have experience in these fields. The result is that at best their products turn out to be superficial and unimaginative. But in denying the visual mode of expression, many artists persist in dealing with subjects that they know little about, or have recently learned.

The reason why visual art is so exciting is that it brings something unique to man, something that neither music, literature, drama nor science can provide. By rejecting the visual mode of expression, the Conceptual artist has not replaced it with anything unique. What he has done is simply borrowed or used other disciplines to express himself, but since his knowledge of other fields very often is limited, his results are shallow, insignificant, and boring.

As far as the future of Conceptual Art is concerned, it can only move away from the visual arts, otherwise it would become visual and cease to be conceptual. The further it moves away from visual art, the less will it become associated with it, and will become a breed on its own. Otherwise it will be a conglomeration of all sorts of disciplines and aspects, tagging along under the label of art, but having none of the requisites to satisfy that label.

In all fairness I feel that Conceptual Art, like any other art movement has a range of projects, some are meaningful and exciting, others boring and banal. Since it is a new art movement, we see the whole range of projects, and only in time will they be

weeded out. At present Conceptual Art lacks refinement and definition, it could either degenerate completely, or grow into something new and exciting.

In conclusion, I feel, that Conceptual Art does not belong to the existing structure of art. Since we cannot relate to it on a perceptual level, it does not fit within the formalist structure of line, space, colour, etc. It is a completely different kind of art. It is not concerned with the visual mode of expression, but its concerns are not completely foreign to art. It cannot be dismissed or rejected, since it does deal with art, but not within the known structure.

Conceptual Art lies in the periphery of art, just as para-psychology lies within the periphery of psychology, but it cannot fit within the existing structure. Therefore, I think, that it should be called Paragraphics, since its place is beside art, but not within the visual structure of art.

Throughout the course of my research I have come to refer to Conceptual Art in an abbreviated form - "con art". I feel that in many cases this abbreviation lives up to its name, and its perpetrators, I have come to regard as con artists.

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with the computer program, as well as the recipe.

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A CONSIDERATION OF SPACE AS A  
PRIMARY EXPERIENCE IN DESIGN

LYDIA FERRABEE

Pour satisfaire une demande du programme de la maîtrise en éducation par l'art, chaque élève devait engager la classe dans la discussion d'un aspect de sa propre discipline qui le concernait particulièrement. L'auteur de ce papier est dessinatrice industrielle de divers produits, de salles d'exposition et d'intérieurs. Parce que l'effet d'un espace sur ceux qui l'occupent a, pour elle, une importance particulière, elle a choisi de faire participer la classe à une étude de l'espace, d'un lieu dans son contexte, au lieu d'entrer en discussion sur les aspects esthétiques et pratiques des produits dits "bien dessinés", qui semblent être la préoccupation habituelle.

## Background

One assignment for the Masters of Art Education program requires each student to involve the class in an aspect of their discipline with which they are particularly concerned. I am a designer and have practised mainly in the area of product, exhibition and interior design. I am particularly concerned with the effects of a space on those who use it, so I chose to involve students in a consideration of space, place and context, rather than to discuss the aesthetic and functional aspects of "well designed" products, which seems to be the usual approach.

## Objectives

- to discover how this group of art educators perceived a space.
- to increase the participants perception of a product as a determining factor in the complex system of communication which continuously transpires between man and man, and man and his environment.
- to increase their feeling and understanding of the tangible, intangible and symbolic aspects of space.

## Method

Participants were asked to go out on their own and find a place, inside or out, where they felt comfortable or uncomfortable. They were to stay there half an hour and consider the space itself, how they felt in it and why they chose it. They were to record the space, and their thoughts and impressions of it, in any way they liked. On their return they were to describe their experience to the rest of the class.

If they wanted a more specific structure it was



suggested that they could consider the space from the following points of view:

for what purpose was it built; how do people use it; how do they relate to each other in it; to what extent is this determined by the physical structure.

what are the tactile qualities of the space; the surfaces, the lighting, the colours, the sound, the quality of the air.

why was the particular space chosen; would you change it, if so how and for what purpose?

It was suggested that participants should then shut their eyes for five or ten minutes, let the feel of the place sink in, let their thoughts come and go without directing them or holding on to them. Afterwards they should make notes of their thoughts, how they felt and of what they were aware. Finally before leaving they should look around and consider the space once more.

#### Report on the event

Of seventeen participants, eleven submitted descriptions of their experiences. Four chose public spaces, three chose university spaces, two visited an apartment, and two moved through different spaces.

Public spaces - three visited restaurants, one visited a bookstore.

University spaces - one chose a seminar room, one the undergraduate study room, and the third an entrance hall.

An apartment - one participant who had designed her own apartment invited another participant to visit it for the first time.

Moving through space - two participants chose to move through a series of spaces rather than remaining in one location.

Extracts of the participant's descriptions of the spaces they visited.

### Public Spaces

#### Restaurants

The restaurants were described in straight forward factual terms as in the following example.

"I went in a restaurant to have a coffee. It was a typical restaurant. The space was used to the maximum and there was not enough space to walk around.

The colours didn't fit together and the use of wallpaper was disasterous because of all the patterns and colours. The lighting was too bright, and not cosy at all. The smell was also typical, french fries, pizza, etc."

A few personal conclusions were included.

"I did not stay very long because we had to sit very close together."

"It looks to me like a place where people go to eat fast and cheap, just like the places people go to buy clothes fast and cheap."

#### Bookstore

"...the first thing that hit me, when I made myself aware of the space, was the low ceiling. I absolutely detest a low ceiling, and I immediately began to feel rather cramped and choked."

"...the aisles are very narrow and there is no real space to step back or linger. You definitely feel that you have to just grab your book and go. I also found the long aisles, the grid, quite annoying. I felt there should be small areas with some benches, or even pillows, where people could sit down."

"The light for my personal taste was just too bright, too like a department store. I felt the place was efficient. The books were at eye level, you could reach them and they were well categorized, but it was not the kind of bookstore I would like to go in for my own enjoyment."

Comment:

This description suggests that the people responsible for the design of this space were more concerned with selling books than making people comfortable and that they didn't see a connection between the two.

University Spaces

Entrance hall

"The space was chosen because of its interesting 19th century details. These invite thoughts about how the building may have been used in the past. I regret that the building cannot be properly restored and still used as classrooms. The building contains the potential for reducing the clinical, sterile atmosphere usually found in modern classrooms used for adult education lectures."

Undergraduate study room

"People seemed oblivious to one another, even though the accommodation forces them to sit very close together."



"It is a very bare room with tiled floors and ceilings, long tables with blue and orange chairs, and smaller more private tables and chairs on the side. These are obviously very popular because I couldn't find a vacant one, and I also wanted to sit there.

The lighting suits the purpose of the room. It is very bright. In fact the best lighting for reading requires that the page be well lit but that the surrounding area to be less well lit as this relaxes the eye by causing the iris to expand and contract. (ref. Larsen, Leslie; Light and its Design.) The walls, floors and curtains are all beige or off-white."

"I think the space should be smaller - warmer - maybe something to make studying, or the space for studying, nicer so that I would want to go there."

"the effect of this study hall on me was not what I had expected. There was nothing warm nor inviting about it. It smelled of cigarettes and perspiration. In a way it gave me a good feeling of a human place to work, of energy and thought. In another way it wasn't a place to put a book down. The environment impinged on me. I felt cramped and obvious. It seemed that nothing I did was of value nor of interest to anyone else and yet I couldn't do anything without attracting undue attention."

#### Seminar room

"I decided to illustrate some of the things that struck me first upon entering the room, in other words the things that grabbed my attention. First I took a slide of the pipes in the ceiling, next a rather mundane detail, the thermostat on the wall. Then the close sterility of the place was probably the third kind of thing that soaked

in after I'd been in the place for a while. The sterility of course seems to me to come from the whiteness of the walls and the floors and the ceiling, and the even lighting and so on."

"In order to show the kind of sterileness that I felt, I chose to deliberately set up the room, so to speak, I lined up four chairs along one wall and photographed them against the blank wall without showing the pipes or the lights, and showing as little of the floor as possible."

#### Comment

The class was being held in this room. As a room I didn't mind it, but it was totally without evidence of human activity, purpose or direction. I arrived a little late. Almost everyone else was there. They had arranged themselves on the upright chairs in a neat circle and were sitting almost motionless, in almost identical positions, under the bright, uniform light, surrounded by the bare, white room, in a stifling, hot atmosphere. There was absolutely nothing else in the room.

The next week a table had been added so people were able to sit up to it, near it, or away from it. There was some room for variation, and any opportunity for an expression of individual preference.

#### An Apartment

##### The resident's description

"This space is very small. Ever since I was very little I remember I said to myself "if only I had a place very, but very, very small,

but just for me, just mine. I remember having made things at home like a little space in a corner that was mine and nobody was to touch it. It has been a little bit like that since I had the apartment in September."

"I can't walk in this apartment which is very good for me because I used to walk lots in my other apartment, which was a big one. I walked from one place to another without any reason. I also walked a lot in my job, because I had to run from school to school and from one place to another within the school. So this year I am really sitting down. The apartment is a kind of nest for me."

"There is a lot of concentration in that place. When I closed my eyes I felt very much the square. The apartment is a square and the fact of the square adds a lot to the impression, I would say, of having a space of my dimension. I'm sure later I would like a much bigger space, but for the moment, for a year or two, I need that square where I can find myself."

"The colours are soft. They are usually the colour of clay, because I do clay work, or pink, or the green of plants. The colours have to be soft in such a small space."

"...the ceiling is very high which is good for me. There's no place for decoration, everything is functional. I consider the plants functional, because in the winter you need green anyway it's functional for me, and my sculptures are also functional for me."

"Just to describe the place. There is a big bed, a long table which is very near the floor,



and a table to work on. There is a curtain to pull when I do not want to see my table full of disorder."

"In contrast with these surroundings the entrance to the apartment house is very dark and outside is the back yard of buildings. Its not what we would call beautiful looking, but for me it provides a contrast."

#### The visitor's description

"The entrance reminded me very much of many entrances I had myself when I was living alone. Dark hallways, corridors, tiled floors. But there was something I liked when I went in, these were the plants which were struggling desperately in the hallway. I asked how they managed to get any light and was told that the caretaker puts them in front of the window. That gave me a little better feeling."

"The apartment is basically a room, a room with a high ceiling which took away from the smallness of it for me. I found that it was a quiet room. I liked the earthy colours. The room is very simply decorated colour-wise, the kind of colours you find in nature, green, brown, white, beige, very cool but very comfortable feeling colours."

"There's a lot of texture in the room. There's wood, rough walls, bamboo mats on the walls, rough cloth, wool, many, many textures which are interesting. There are also a lot of objects around this small space, but they seem to fit together very well, and they provide a lot of things to look at, which is rather nice. There is a nice variety between the softness of the plants, the hard lines of the little sculptures and the straight lines of the table and bed."

"there's music, nice music which I liked and which seemed to suit the atmosphere of the place."

"Although the space wouldn't suit me, I'm much to spread out for that kind of space now, I could see that she could function in it very well, so that for her it was a good space. For me it was an interesting space but not one I could operate in.

When I closed my eyes I was lying on the bed and I was conscious of the fact that the ceiling was very high, I knew the walls were there, but I felt the ceiling was high and it gave me a feeling of room to breathe."

"The room was a bit too warm for me, but at the same time it was a warm, humid kind of room which is very good for plants. The plants were very healthy and as I love plants, I felt that my discomfort was not important for the short time I was there, in view of the fact the plants were benefiting from it."

### Moving through space

#### First account

"I went down McKay to Ste. Catherine. I didn't take any notes because I wanted to feel the space as I was moving in it. So I just walked. I turned left on Peel and I went to Sherbrooke Street and from Sherbrooke I came back here, and since I had made a square I was rather happy."

#### Second account

..."fine pair of lines on the escalator going down, sound of man walking behind

me. Lights, push doors, stench of piss everywhere, three pink lifesavers in the urinal, stainless steel mindless reflections, a fan going, pull up zipper, man in yellow jacket enters, picks up paper towels in front of towel dispenser, makes the rounds down along the sinks in front of the mirrors, picks up more paper at the other end, comes back, opens up the doors of the john, I'm thinking what a life doing this all the time, he leaves scuffing his feet, I'm alone again, I open one door, open another"...

..."get out keys, into car, car stopping behind me looking for a parking space, bright flashing light and sirens make open spaces on de Maisonneuve, yellow flasher still going, cars pass, red break lights flash at intersection"...

..."conscious of a guy in a car behind me, see his lights in my mirror, is he too close, he just left, revealing the shiny moist road surface in the mirror, strange new ideas fill the air all at once, "The wild flowers grow out of the fields of people," from a song on the radio, looking south on McKay don't like the structure of the buildings, don't want to discuss them, remember when we used to talk about great compositions on the walls where buildings had been torn down, heavy bass on radio, simple beat to someone singing "take your pleasure when you find it", wish car had a padded swivel chair, push back the seat, "black magic woman", taxi stops behind me, feel him imposing on my parking space."

Notes on some of the discussions which followed.

One participant said she found it interesting that I should have chosen for a primary experience



in design, a consideration of space, and that I had asked them to close their eyes, thereby asking them to exist without sight and outside time.

I mentioned that I was very interested in the reaction of the only two people who had in fact stayed still and shut their eyes. One, sitting in her own room, had really become aware for the first time that it was a square. She interrupted me to mention that she too had been interested in that, and had thought about it a lot since. She had not realized how important it was to her. The other person had lain on the bed and become particularly conscious of the high ceiling. Somehow with their eyes shut they seemed to have extended their sensing to the limits of the room and become more aware of them.

A participant then defined one's space as the place you occupy (what I call your displacement) and went on to explain that the primary experience of space is in the womb where you are the space and there is no more. The womb is the pure experience of space and touch, without sight and outside time.

A participant commented that asking people to shut their eyes was suggestive of darkness and sleep. I disagreed. I was asking students to be very much alert, and it isn't dark when you shut your eyes. I suggested she was relating the experience back to the primitive, primary sensation of space in the womb, a concrete, material, physical space. But I was concerned with encouraging people to sense the energy fields and forces by which we are primarily surrounded and defined after birth.

### Summary

It was apparent from retrospective comments made by participants that through the event they

had become more conscious of certain aspects of space. Some became more active in observing the physical details of their surroundings and considering how they could improve upon them, while others were particularly concerned with how spaces effected them and how they individually responded to the environment. In every case, however, it seemed obvious that a person's perception of space was as much dependent on his own being, and affected by his own wider involvement at that time, as on the space itself.

In the discussions that followed the reports, the consideration of space seemed to provide a mirror in which we could reflect ourselves, our preoccupations, our perceptions, our needs and our disciplines. We were using it to describe, relate and oppose our images of existence.

#### Thoughts, Comments, Observations

Man is the artist of his space making and defining it, with his presence, his movements through it, and by his action in altering it.

As it appears to be instinctive to make oneself as comfortable as possible in one's surroundings the experience of being able to effect one's environment, as well as adapting to it, probably makes an important contribution to the balanced development of a person.  
(Rationale for Design Education at the Elementary Level, Lydia Ferrabee, INVESTIGART 1, Spring 1973)

A person's response to an environment depends upon:

- an emotional exchange linked to associations with past experiences.
- the physical exchange dependent upon the receptivity of the senses.

- The intellectual exchange dominated by the inclination to analyse, rationalize and order on the basis of past experiences, all the messages received from the environment.
- Every physical act reflects a mental attitude and an emotional response.
- A person's response to space is on a continuum. At one end he is able to effect it, at the other he must adapt to it.
- Industrialization has pushed man's skills of adaptation and flexibility to their limit. Now perhaps it is time to test his powers of realization.
- In an environment people are affected as much by the light, colours, sound, temperature and the energy fields of other living organisms, as they are by the physical components of the space. For example if a space makes a person uncomfortable he is likely to be restless and irritable and this will adversely affect others near him.
- A designer should attempt to develop his total sensing mechanism in order to become as sensitive as possible to the energy fields and influences that affect a situation.

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This provides information on energy emissions  
recorded in living organisms, and other interesting  
things!



Photo No. 1

Spaces articulate the values, attitudes and intentions of those who are responsible for their design. This is a students lounge area in the Hall Building, Sir George Williams University.









Photos 2, 3 and 4

Our living spaces are being reduced and the number of divergent activities they accommodate is increasing. It is therefore becoming necessary for a well designed space to be flexible enough for occupants to re-arrange it according to their needs.

This room is furnished with a very simple system of sturdy stacking boxes and vinyl-covered cushions. They are virtually maintenance free and can accommodate a wide variety of activities.

Photo 1 - Justin enjoys a quiet moment in a space he has defined for himself.

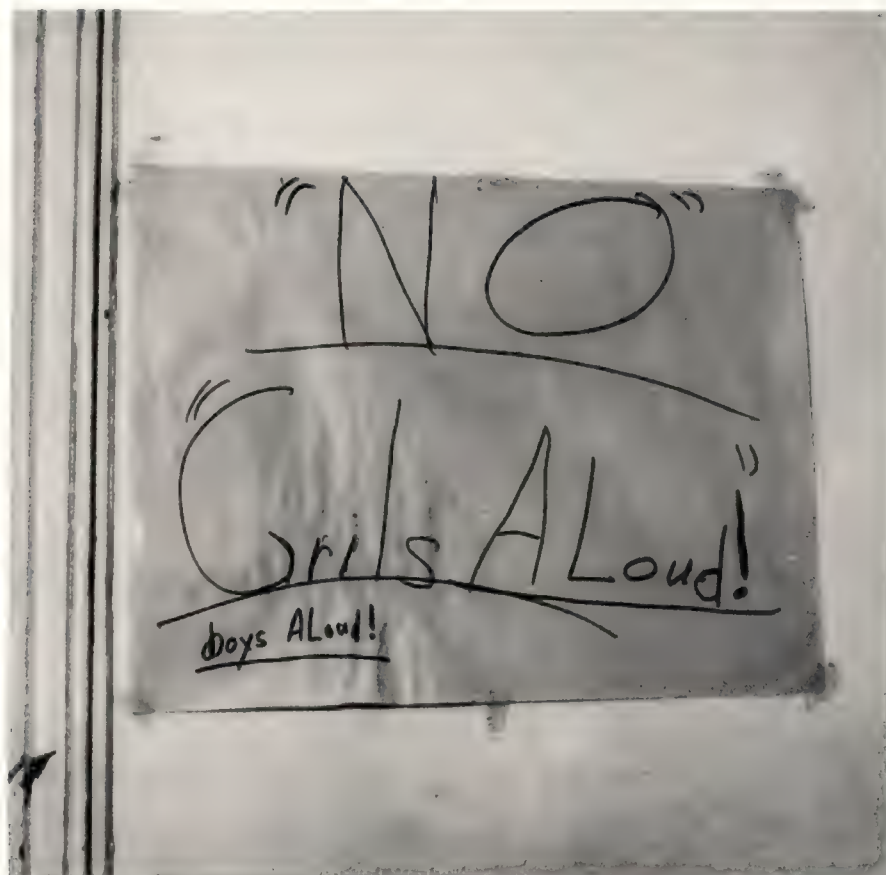
Photo 2 - a group of visitors are having supper

Photo 3 - a group of children are building a 'fort'

Photos 5 and 6

In this backyard village the children have worked out both group and individual spaces for themselves.







Photos 8, 9, 10 and 11

Given the opportunity children are likely to reach the stage when they will want to build spaces for themselves, both individually and with a group for a group. The environments they build usually reflect the social conditions in which they live.

Photos 8 and 9 - In the city children tend to be watched almost continuously by one apprehensive adult or another. When this group decided to enclose a space for themselves they provided no windows and entry was made by climbing up a fragile lilac tree and dropping through a small hole in the roof. They didn't have many adult visitors.

Photos 10 and 11- In the relative privacy of his room Brian built an open, three tier space frame. The top level, with bookshelves built into a niche, is his personal space. The two lower levels are for friends and visitors. The rest of the room provides the community space.





124





Photos 12 and 13

At the Maggie's farm campus of the Ontario College of Art students had to build their own structures and live in them for at least a week during the winter months. Many students stayed longer. Then, having built their individual structures, they come to terms with their need for community spaces. The program encouraged students to focus on their minimum needs and to build up from there.





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